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J. B. LINN.

VALERIAN,

A NARRATIVE POEM:

INTENDED, IN PART, TO DESCRIBE

THE EARLY PERSECUTIONS OF CHRISTIANS,

AND RAPIDLY TO

ILLUSTRATE THE INFLUENCE OF CHRISTIANITY

ON THE

MANNERS OF NATIONS.

BY JOHN BLAIR LINN, D. D.

LATE PASTOR OF THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CONGREGATION, IN PHILADELPHIA.

WITH A SKETCH

OF THE

LIFE AND CHARACTER OF THE AUTHOR.

Philadelphia,

PRINTED BY THOMAS AND GEORGE PALMER,

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1805.

A SKETCH OF THE LIFE AND CHARACTER

OF

JOHN BLAIR LINN.

JOHN BLAIR LINN was descended from ancestors who originally came from the British islands. They appear to have been emigrants at an early period, and to have given their descendants as just a claim to the title of American, as the nature of things will allow any civilized inhabitant of the United States to acquire.

His name bears testimony to the paternal and maternal stock from which he sprung. His great-grandfather, William Linn, was an emigrant from Ireland, who settled land in the wilderness of Pennsylvania, and whose eldest son, William, was the father of a numerous family, of whom the present Dr. William Linn was the eldest.

The father of John Blair Linn received a careful education, which his family enabled him to complete at the college at Princeton. He was trained to the ministry, in the presbyterian church, and married, at an early age, Rebecca Blair, the third daughter of the Reverend John Blair. Her brother and uncle were likewise clergymen, and the family were eminently distinguished by their knowledge and piety.

Their eldest son, John Blair Linn, was born in Shippensburg, in Pennsylvania, March 14, 1777, at no great distance from the spot at which his father first drew

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breath, and where his great-grandfather first established his residence in this new world. The humble dwelling which was first erected in the forest still existed, at a small distance from that town, and continued, for a considerable time after this, to be inhabited by his great-grandfather, who lived upwards of a hundred years.

It is impossible for his survivors to recount the earliest incidents of his life; to trace the first indications of future character and genius; or enumerate the little adventures and connections of his childhood. The juvenile stages of our moral and intellectual progress, which are in all cases entertaining and instructive, are so, in a particular manner, when they relate to eminent persons. The authentic memorials of any man's life and character are only to be found in his own narrative, compared with the observations of others. In the present case, Mr. Linn's modesty prevented him from being his own historian, and peculiar circumstances occasioned his early life to pass over without much observation from others. We cannot any longer profit by his own recollections: the hand is now cold, and the tongue silent, which were best qualified to gratify the curiosity of love or veneration. We only know that he acquired the rudiments of knowledge at an age somewhat earlier than is customary. He was initiated into the Latin language while yet a child, and evinced very early a strong attachment to books. On his father's removal to New York, when John was only nine years old, he enjoyed new opportunities of improvement, under several respectable teachers. The happiest period of his life, however, in his own opinion, consisted of two or three years which he spent at a place of education at Flatbush, in Long Island. He was in his thirteenth year when he left this seminary for New York, where, at Columbia college, his education was completed.

Fortunate is that man who has spent any part of his early years at a country school. In youth, every object possesses the charms of novelty; care and disease have as yet made no inroads on the heart, nor stained that pure and bright medium, through which the external world makes its way to the fancy. The noise, the filth, the dull sights and unwholesome exhalations of a city are, in consequence of this enchantment, ever new and delightful to the youthful heart; but how much is this pleasure heightened, when the objects presented to view, and by which we are surrounded, are in themselves agreeable! There is something in the refreshing smells, the green, the quiet, the boundless prospects of the country, congenial to the temper of human beings, at all ages; but these possess ineffable charms at that age, when the joints are

firm and elastic, when the pulse beats cheerily, and no dark omens or melancholy retrospects invade the imagination. To roam through a wood with gay companions, to search the thicket for blackberries, to bathe in the clear running brook, are pleasures which fill the memory with delicious images, and are frequently called up to afford a little respite to the heart from the evils of our subsequent experience.

Dr. Linn was indebted to nature for a healthful rather than a robust constitution. He was a stranger to disease till after he had reached manhood, and of that constitutional vivacity, which mere health confers, he possessed a very large share. His fancy was alive to the beauties of nature, and he experienced none of those little vexations and crosses, which some lads are doomed to suffer, through the malice of school-fellows, the tyranny of ushers, and the avarice of housekeepers. Hence, in the latter part of his life, no recollections were so agreeable as those of the time he passed at Flatbush, when he revelled in the full enjoyment of health, and its attendant cheerfulness. They formed a vivid contrast to that joyless and dreary state, to which disease afterwards reduced him.

He was near fourteen years of age when he returned home and went to college. He now entered on a scene widely different, in all respects, from that to which he had been previously accustomed: a new system of scholastic discipline, a new circle of associates, the sensations and views incident to persons on the eve of manhood.

The ensuing four years were active and important ones. The moral and intellectual dispositions, which men may possibly bring into the world with them, become fixed and settled, and receive their final direction at this age. When the appetites are vigorous, the senses keen, and the conduct regulated by temper and passion, rather than by prudence and experience, we are most alive to all impressions, and generally take that path which we pursue for the rest of our days. It was during this period that Mr. Linn's taste was formed; and though his moral and professional views underwent considerable changes afterwards, the literary inclinations which he now imbibed, or unfolded, continued to adhere to him for the rest of his life.

His genius now evinced a powerful tendency to poetry and criticism. What are called the fine writers of the age, and especially the poets, became his darling study. In a youthful breast, the glow of admiration is soon followed by the zeal to

imitate; and he not only composed several pieces, both in prose and verse, but procured the publication of some of them in a distinct volume, before his seventeenth year. These performances possess no small merit, if we judge of them by comparison with the youth and inexperience of the writer. They manifest considerable reading, a remarkably improved taste, and talents which only wanted the discipline and knowledge of age to make them illustrious.

In a city where there is an established theatre, a young man, smitten with a passion for letters, can scarcely fail of becoming an assiduous frequenter of its exhibitions. Plays form a large portion of the fashionable literature of a refined nation. The highest powers of invention are displayed in the walks of dramatic poetry; and what the young enthusiast devours in his closet, he hastens with unspeakable eagerness to behold invested with the charms of life and action on the stage. At that period, some performers of merit had been recently imported from Europe, the theatre was, in an eminent degree, a popular amusement, and Mr. Linn was at that age when the enchantment of such exhibitions is greatest. The theatre accordingly became his chief passion.

To austere and scrupulous minds, the theatre is highly obnoxious, not only as hurtful in itself, but as seducing unwary youth into collateral vices and undue expences. On this account, such establishments are certainly liable to much censure. Whether reasonably or not, mankind have always annexed some disrepute to the profession of an actor; and hence no one will give himself to that profession, who cherishes in himself any lively regard for reputation. The odium with which any profession is loaded, even though originally groundless, has an unfortunate tendency to create an excuse for itself in the principles and manners of those who adopt it. To make men vicious, little more is necessary than to treat them as if they were so.

The example of Mr. Linn, however, may lead us to distinguish between that admiration for the drama, which leads some persons to the theatre, and those dissolute and idle habits, by which the attendance of others is produced, and which evince a taste for the life and manners of the *actor*, rather than a passion for excellent *acting*. The moral conduct of this youth was at all times irreproachable; and the impression made upon his fancy, by the great masters of the drama, seems to have contributed to

his security from low tastes and vicious pleasures, rather than to have laid him open to their influence.

When his academical career was finished, he was eighteen years of age; and it being necessary to adopt some profession, his choice, and that of his family, fell upon the law. The law leads more directly and effectually to honour, power, and profit, in America, than any of what are termed the liberal professions. As we are strangers to all hereditary distinctions, the road to eminence is open to all; and while the practice of the law is extremely lucrative, it tends to bring forth talents and industry into public notice, and to recommend men to offices of profit and honour. A young man who, though meanly descended, shows some marks of genius, and has received some degree of education beyond that of mere reading and writing his native tongue, seldom thinks of pursuing any mechanical trade, and if he has some ambition, he is generally educated to the bar. He is thus placed in the direct road of that profit and honour, which waits on political popularity, and may put in his claim, with more success than the followers of any other calling, for a seat in the national councils, and for any official station. The children of persons who are raised above others, by their riches or station, are, of course, whether qualified or not, destined to a liberal profession, and the law is generally preferred, because it affords the best means of building up a name or a fortune. Mr. Linn was probably influenced in his choice of this path, more because it was honourable and lucrative, than because it was particularly suited to gratify any favourite taste. He does not appear, therefore, to have applied with much assiduity or zeal to his new pursuit: his favourite authors continued to engage most of his attention; and his attachment to poetry acquired new force, by the contrast which the splendid visions of Shakespeare and Tasso bore to the naked abstractions and tormenting subtleties of Blackstone and Coke.

He was placed under the direction of Alexander Hamilton, who was a friend of his father, and who took upon himself, with ardour, the care of perfecting the studies and promoting the fortunes of the son. Instead, however, of becoming enamoured of the glory, excellence, or usefulness that environ the names of Murray and of Erskine, Mr. Linn regarded the legal science every day with new indifference or disgust, which, at the end of the first year, induced him to relinquish the profession altogether.

Before this event took place, he had ventured to produce a dramatic composition, called Bourville Castle, on the stage. This performance was one of the many dramatic works he had previously concerted, but the only one which was ever performed on the stage. Its success was such as had been sufficient to have fixed the literary destiny of some minds. But his dramatic career was scarcely commenced, when it was entirely relinquished. His passion for theatrical amusements yielded place to affections of a more serious and beneficial nature; and those religious impressions, by which, from his earliest infancy, his mind had been occasionally visited, about this time assumed a permanent dominion over him. After much deliberation, he determined to devote his future life to service in the church.

Such a decision, in a youthful and ardent mind, could only flow from deep convictions of duty. The heavy obligations which every clergyman incurs, the extraordinary claims which are made upon him, not only as a *teacher* of virtue and religion, but as a living *example* of their influence, form, to a conscientious mind, the most arduous circumstances of this profession. Considered as a calling, by which a subsistence is to be obtained, and a family reared, its disadvantages are very numerous. He is entirely precluded from any collateral and lucrative application of his time or talents, not only by the constant pressure of his clerical duties, but by the general sense of decorum; while the stipend he receives from the church is in many cases inadequate to decent subsistence, and in no case does it more than answer the current necessities and demands of a family. The clergyman deprives himself of all means of providing for the establishment of his children in trade or in marriage, or even for the period of age or infirmity in himself, by embracing a profession which, in many cases, appears to have a tendency to impair his health, and to shorten the duration of his life.

In Mr. Linn's case, these sacrifices were greater than ordinary. There were many circumstances to inspire his generous mind with unusual and commendable solicitude for the acquisition of fortune, and his new engagements were incompatible with those pursuits, which had hitherto formed his chief passion, and engrossed the greater portion of his time. Such, however, was the strength of his mind, and the force of his religious impressions, that not only the prospects of power and riches, but the more bewitching promises of dramatic popularity, were renounced with little hesitation or reluctance.

New York was, in some respects, an eligible place for prosecuting theological as well as legal studies, but Mr. Linn weighed its disadvantages and benefits with too impartial a hand to allow himself to remain there. Along with his former habits and pursuits, he perceived the necessity of relinquishing many of his former companions, and abandoning the scenes to which he had been accustomed to resort. His prudence directed him to withdraw as much as possible from the busy and luxurious world, and to put far away all those objects which were calculated to divert him from the object to which he had deliberately devoted his future life.

With these views he left New York, and retired to Schenectady. He there put himself under the care of Dr. Romeyn, a professor of theology in the reformed Dutch church. His zeal and resolution appear to have continually increased in favour of his new pursuit. Experience, indeed, gradually unfolded difficulties of which he had not been at first aware. The importance and arduousness of the part which he had assigned himself became daily more apparent, but these discoveries diminished not his zeal, though they somewhat appalled his courage. In a letter to his father, written during this probation, and after a short visit to his family, he says, "When I was in New York, I saw more clearly than I had ever yet seen, the road of preferment which I have forsaken. I saw more clearly than ever, that worldly friendship and favour follow the footsteps of pomp and ambition. I hope, however, never to have cause to regret the choice I have made. I hope to see more and more the little worth of earthly things, and the infinite importance of those which are eternal. As I have no treasures on earth, may I lay up treasures in heaven!

"The disgust which I contracted for the law might perhaps chiefly arise from a sickly and over delicate taste. The pages of Coke and Blackstone contained, to my apprehension, nothing but horrid jargon. The language of the science was discord, and its methods the perfection of confusion to me; and this, whether a fault in me or not, I cannot tell, but certain I am it was past remedy. But my aversion to the bar had something else in it than the mere loathing of taste. I could not bear its tricks and artifices; the enlisting of all one's wit and wisdom in the service of any one that could pay for them.

"My mind, which has been for a long time restless and uneasy, and continually on the wing, feels already, in this state of comparative solitude, that sober and quiet

peace, to which it has been long a stranger. I regret not the gay objects of New York, which I have exchanged for the now dreary scenes of Schenectady. The pleasures of my former life were often the pleasures of an hour, leaving behind them the anxieties of days and of years. A very few excepted, I regret not those friends of my early youth, from whom I have removed. Friendship is in most cases only a weathercock, shifting with the lightest gale, and scarcely stable long enough to be viewed. The applause of men I no longer prize, and self-approbation becomes every day of greater value."

In this retreat he pursued his studies assiduously. How he employed his leisure, what books he read, what society he enjoyed, and what particular advances he made in knowledge or in virtue, in the government of himself or his acquaintance with the world, it is not in the power of the present narrator to communicate. It appears, however, that he indulged himself in some poetical effusions, and wrote occasionally some essays in prose, which were published in a newspaper of that place. Though not unworthy of praise from so young a man, their intrinsic merit does not entitle them to preservation.

He obtained a license to preach from the classis of Albany, in the year 1798, having just entered his twenty-second year. Having now an opportunity of displaying his qualifications of taste, knowledge, and piety, the world soon became acquainted with his character. His merits in the pulpit were enhanced by his youth; a circumstance which, while it afforded an apology for some exuberances of style and sentiment, imparted lively expectations of future excellence. He received calls from the presbyterian church at Elizabethtown, New Jersey, and from the first presbyterian church at Philadelphia, than which there were no religious congregations in America, whose choice could be more honourable to the object of it.

He finally decided, though not without much hesitation and reluctance, in favour of the latter situation. In this he was influenced by many motives besides those which, in such a case, would naturally operate upon a young mind, eager for distinction. The principal of these originated in diffidence of his own powers, which he justly imagined would be subjected to less arduous trials, as an assistant minister, or co-pastor, than where the sole charge should devolve upon himself. Under the auspices of so illustrious a colleague as the late Dr. Ewing, he hoped to enter on his important office

with fewer disadvantages than most young men are subjected to. The errors of youth and inexperience would be less fatal, and would be more easily prevented and corrected, than in a different situation. The paternal treatment he always received from Dr. Ewing fulfilled these hopes, and his decision in their favour was fully justified by the veneration and affection of his people. He was ordained, and installed in his office, in June, 1799.

He had very early bestowed his affections on Miss Hester Bailey, a young lady of beauty and merit, daughter of colonel John Bailey, a respectable inhabitant of Poughkeepsie, in the state of New York. On his settlement at Philadelphia, he married this lady. The fruits of this alliance, which was interrupted by death at the end of five years, were three sons, the two youngest of whom survived their father.

The succeeding two years of his life passed in diligent and successful application to the duties of his pastoral office. The increasing infirmities of his venerable colleague made these duties in no small degree heavy to a young man, who was just beginning his career, and who, as yet, had not acquired the benefits of preparation and experience. Heavy though they were, and punctual and meritorious as was his diligence in their performance, his active spirit found leisure to compose two poems, the last of which was of considerable length, during this interval.

The first was a poem on the death of Washington, written in imitation of the style of Ossian, whom Mr. Linn held in higher estimation than any other poet. This performance was a happy specimen of this style, and the author's success was the more remarkable, on account of the disparity between the theme he had chosen, and those topics to which the Caledonian poet had consecrated his song.

His second attempt was more grave and arduous. It was a didactic essay on those powers from which poetry itself derives its spirit and existence. The subject of this poem is explained by its title, "The Powers of Genius." It is a rapid and pleasing descant upon the nature and operations of genius, and a general view of its origin and progress. It is accompanied with notes, by which doubtful passages are explained, and the reasonings of the poet amplified, confirmed, and illustrated, by new and apposite examples.

Mr. Linn has justified himself, in bestowing some of his leisure on subjects of this kind, by observing, in his preface to this work, that "literature, next to religion, is the fountain of our greatest consolation and delight. Though it be a solemn truth that the deepest erudition, disconnected with religion, cannot enlighten the regions beyond the grave, or afford consolation on the bed of death, yet, when united with religion, literature renders men more eminently useful, opens wider their intellect to the reception of divine light, banishes religious superstition, and bows the knee, with purer adoration, before the throne of God. Literature on the rugged journey of life scatters flowers, it overshadows the path of the weary, and refreshes the desert with its streams. He who is prone to sensual pursuits may seek his joy in the acquirement of silver and gold, and bury his affections with the treasure in his coffers. The nobler soul, enlightened by genius and taste, looks far above these possessions. His riches are the bounty of knowledge, his joys are those which wealth cannot purchase. He contemplates nature in her endless forms, and finds companions, where men of different pursuits would experience the deepest solitude."

Those phantoms which genius produces, and taste embellishes, had a powerful influence over the imagination of Mr. Linn. External objects were habitually viewed by him through a poetical medium, and seldom through any other. Their attractions, in his eyes, and their merit, consisted almost wholly in their power to inspire emotion, and exalt the fancy. The deductions of pure science, whether mathematical, physical, or moral, he held in very slender estimation: their simplicity was to him naked and insipid, dreary and cold. His natural temper, and all his habits of meditation, eminently fitted him for a poet; the subject of this work had been familiar to his earliest conceptions; and he expatiated in this element as in one most congenial to his nature.

After describing genius, and fixing on invention as its most suitable criterion, he proceeds to show the alliance between genius and fancy, judgment and sympathy. He then, in a rapid manner, describes the progress of genius, and illustrates the independence of rules, which it sometimes manifests, by the example of Shakespeare, Ossian, Ariosto, and Burns.

The influence of culture on genius naturally calls to the poet's mind the image of Edwin, and the various forms of excellence which genius is qualified to uphold leads him into an enumeration of celebrated names, in various departments of prose and verse.

Some of the moral stimulants and effects of genius are next displayed; narrative is called in to the aid of precept, and the poem closes with a concise view of the progress of genius in different countries: Egypt, Greece, Italy, Britain, and America. To his native country the poet is patriotically partial, and not only predicts her future eminence in literature, but deems the progress she has already made by no means contemptible.

The merit of this performance has received the best testimony of which merit of this kind is susceptible, in the approbation of the public. The work, in a few months after its first appearance, demanded a new edition, and it has been published in a very splendid style in Europe.

Several smaller pieces were published in the same volume with this poem, some of which have merit considerably above mediocrity, and manifest a genius in the writer which only wanted the habits of reflection and revision to entitle him to a high rank in the fraternity of poets.

Mr. Linn's temperament was sanguine, and his health at all times extremely variable. From his earliest infancy, he was liable to fits of severe indisposition, which, to one of his peculiar temper, were of far more importance than they would have proved to another. There was a powerful sympathy between his body and mind. All disorders in the former produced confusion and despondency in the latter. He was always prone to portend an unfavourable issue to his disease, and being deeply impressed with the belief that he was doomed to an early grave, every sickness was considered as the messenger appointed to fulfil his destiny.

It was not, however, till the year 1802 that his constitution received any lasting or material injury. In the summer of this year, he set out on a journey to New York. The weather being extremely hot, and the chaise affording no effectual protection from the rays of a burning sun, he was suddenly thrown into a swoon, which was followed by an ardent fever. This accident occurred near Woodbridge, in New Jersey, and he was carried from the road, by some passengers, to the hospitable roof of Dr. Rowe, a clergyman of that place.

From this attack he recovered sufficiently in a few days, to enable him to return home; but from that period to his death, every day's experience evinced that this accident had done his constitution an irreparable mischief. His nervous system appeared, for some time, to have been chiefly affected, and in a way particularly distressful and deplorable, since it interfered with his duty as a preacher. In attempting to speak, his brain was frequently seized with a torpor and dizziness, which made it difficult for him to keep himself from falling. The same affection sometimes attended him while walking or sitting. Its visits were capricious and uncertain. It would sometimes afford him a respite of days or weeks. Its returns were sudden and unlooked for, and it always brought in its train a heavy dejection of mind, and equally unfitted him for the performance of his public duties, and for obtaining relief from any solitary occupation or social amusement.

No one could struggle with his infirmity more strenuously than Mr. Linn. His family can bear witness to his efforts to fulfil his public duties, notwithstanding this secret enemy. So successful were these efforts, that he often preached with his usual energy and eloquence, when nothing but the rails of his pulpit supported him, and when a deadly sickness pervaded his whole frame.

That his powers of reasoning and reflection were unimpaired by this accident, he very soon afforded an incontestible proof, in the spirit with which he carried on a short controversy, during this year, with Dr. Priestley.

Dr. Priestley, who acquired so much celebrity in Europe, had, a few years before this, taken up his abode in the United States. His zeal for knowledge was by no means diminished by the circumstances which occasioned his exile, and his attachment to the controversial mode of advancing knowledge was as ardent as ever. His numerous publications, however, during the early years of his residence among us, were chiefly confined to politics and chemistry. His moral and theological effusions failed to awaken the spirit of controversy, till the publication of a short treatise on the merits of Socrates, in the year 1802. In this performance, Dr. Priestley drew a comparison between Jesus Christ and Socrates, in which the former was degraded, agreeably to the socinian system, to the level of mere humanity, while the merits of the latter were exalted to a higher pitch than, in the opinion of Mr. Linn, strict justice allowed.

This comparison was instituted between the two persons, in relation to their moral qualities only, and Priestley's design was to maintain the superiority of Jesus, even admitting the most favourable suppositions that have been formed with regard to the character of Socrates, and the least favourable ones with regard to Christ. In both these points, however, he was deemed by some to be highly blameable, inasmuch as he admitted and argued upon suppositions erroneous and unjust in both cases.

The great fame and veteran skill of Priestley, and the consciousness of his own youth and inexperience, did not intimidate Mr. Linn from stepping forth in a cause in which religion and morality were deeply interested. Those points in the conduct of the Athenian sage, which had been hastily admitted as authentic by Dr. Priestley, underwent an impartial and rigid scrutiny from his young opponent; the dreams of traditional credulity were subjected to a critical investigation; and while the character of Socrates was degraded to its proper point in the scale, the transcendant merits of Christ, both in his human and divine capacity, were urged with unusual eloquence.

The true nature and office of Christ could not fail of coming strongly into view on this occasion, and a second reply, to a second publication of Mr. Linn, was the last and dying effort of Priestley on this sublunary stage, in favour of the socinian doctrines.

The merits of Mr. Linn in this controversy seem to be generally acknowledged, both by the friends and enemies of the cause which he espoused. The latter withheld not their admiration from the knowledge and genius displayed in these productions, and which, while they would do credit to any age, were peculiarly honourable and meritorious in so youthful an advocate.

If he has treated his venerable adversary with undue asperity, as some of Dr. Priestley's adherents are disposed to believe, his youth, and the importance of the tenets he supported, will abundantly plead his excuse with impartial minds. Instead of deserving blame for that degree of warmth which he displayed, he is rather entitled to eminent praise, for preserving his warmth within such rigid limits. Those who are acquainted with the spirit of religious disputes will only be surprised at the moderation which so ardent and impetuous a mind was able to maintain, in so delicate a controversy, and of which it is difficult to find another example.

There was no one, however, who regarded these asperities with less indulgence than himself. For Dr. Priestley's attainments in the physical sciences, he entertained a high veneration, and abhorred that spirit of animosity and rancour, with which literary controversies are generally managed. His own conduct in this respect, though so little culpable, gave him regrets, which the death of his opponent contributed to augment.

During this period, he likewise indulged himself in putting together the materials of a poem, to which he intended to entrust his future fame, as a poet. The scheme was somewhat of an epic nature, but he did not intend to restrict himself by any technical rules or canons. He merely aspired to produce a narrative in verse, which should possess the qualities which render verse delightful, and make a narrative interesting and instructive.

The poem which he left behind him, and which his friends have deemed it but justice to his memory to publish, is, in some respects, sufficiently entire for the press, but is, in fact, only a fragment of a plan, copious and comprehensive. It is contained in the present volume, and will come before the public tribunal with many silent apologies for its defects. The writer is disabled from revising and correcting his own labours, and sacred modesty forbids a surviving friend to prune or to retrench, without any warrant but his own frail judgment. It may be said to be, like its author, called to its account burthened with those imperfections, which a longer preparation and probation might have lessened or removed.

To those early and memorable proofs of literary excellence, Mr. Linn was indebted for the honour of the degree of doctor in divinity, conferred upon him about this time, by the university of Pennsylvania. This honour, never before, probably, conferred upon so young a man, was decreed with a zealous unanimity. It may be deemed the spontaneous reward of merit, since, so far from being sought for or claimed by Mr. Linn, neither he nor his familiar friends entertained the least suspicion of the design, before it was carried into execution.

His literary performances were the fruits of those intervals, which his professional duty, and the disease which had rooted itself in his constitution, had afforded him. These intervals of health and tranquillity became gradually fewer and shorter. Besides

occasional indispositions, by which he was visited more frequently than formerly, those sensations became more and more permanent, which always appeared to his imagination unerring indications of approaching death. To a mind formed like his, these symptoms had been productive of a dreary melancholy, had their effects been confined wholly to his own person, but, with him, they received bitter aggravation from reflections on the helpless state in which an untimely death would leave his family.

No one ever entertained a more lively sense of the duty which his profession had imposed upon him, nor more ardent wishes to be useful to those around him. The voice of blame, even when unmerited, shot the keenest pangs into his soul. The peculiar nature of his feelings, of which there was no external or visible tokens, agonized him with the terror, that any failure of parochial duty might be imputed rather to defect of inclination than of power. Hence was he continually led to overtask his own strength, and to hasten, by undue exertions, that event which was to put a final close to his activity.

From the beginning of his malady, he entertained serious thoughts of resigning his pastoral office. Whether his own feelings conveyed more deadly intimations than his friends imagined, or whether his temper was peculiarly disposed to despondency and fear, he predicted nothing from these symptoms but lasting infirmity. The exercises of the pulpit were peculiarly unfavourable to his disease. In a different calling, he imagined that his health would be less endangered. Some calling, that might perhaps prove far more arduous, and would certainly be much less agreeable, he was yet extremely desirous of embracing, provided it was such as his peculiar constitution was fitted to endure: but though no such path presented itself to his view, yet so exquisitely painful was it to him to receive a recompense for duties that he was unable to perform, that very often, during the two last years of his life, had he formed the resolution of absolutely resigning his call.

As often as these resolutions were formed, they were shaken, for a time, by the admonitions and counsels of his friends. They endeavoured to call back to his bosom that hope which had deserted it; they made light of the symptoms he complained of; they persuaded him that his infirmities were transient; that time alone would dissipate them; or, at least, that some change of regimen, some rural excursion, or a larger portion of exercise than ordinary, would be sufficient to restore him.

They insisted on the unreasonableness of despairing of his recovery, before a trial had been made of the proper remedies. His physicians contributed to inspire him with the same confidence. By these means was hope occasionally revived in his heart. He consented to try the remedies prescribed to him; he obtained a respite from church service, and made several journies in pursuit of health: but all these experiments were fruitless. They afforded him a brief and precarious respite from pain, and he eagerly returned to the pulpit. But his feelings quickly warned him that his hopes were fallacious: his infirmities were sure to return upon him with redoubled force; despondency invaded him anew; he again embraced the resolution of resigning his post, from which he was again dissuaded with difficulty greater than before.

These mental struggles and vicissitudes were alone sufficient to have destroyed a much more robust constitution than his. The gloom which hovered over his mind became deeper and more settled. A respite from pain or weakness was not sufficient to dispel it, even for a time; and though his anxieties were more keen at one time than another, long was the period during which he was an utter stranger to joy. If he took up a book, over which the poet's fancy and the poet's numbers had shed the most vivid hues and the richest harmony, and which, in former days, had been a fountain of delight, he found the spell at an end; it had lost its power to beguile his heart of its cares, or impart the smallest relief to his apprehensions. Did he walk forth into the fields, and survey nature in her fairest forms, the scene merely conjured up a mournful contrast between the pleasures which the landscape once imparted, and its present monotony and dreariness. In fine, there is little doubt that his latent malady infected the springs of life much less rapidly by its own direct force, than indirectly by its influence in lowering his spirits.

These feelings cannot be explained but by admitting the influence of constitution. Few men had less reason to dread death, on account of that existence which follows it. If a blameless life and enlightened piety could smooth the path to the grave, or if death were indebted for its terrors merely to the apprehension of its consequences in another mode of existence, few men had less reason than Mr. Linn to view it with anxiety. But such is the physical constitution of most men, that their feelings on this head are by no means in subjection to their reason. The raising of blood seems particularly calculated to affect the spirits of the patient, and the sight of that fluid, so essential to life, oozing through unnatural channels, is sure to appal and disconcert the

most courageous minds. Mr. Linn was haunted, from his earliest youth, with a fatal persuasion that he should die young, and of all diseases he regarded consumption with most abhorrence. His present symptoms were to him infallible tokens, not only that death was hastening on him, but that it was approaching in a form the most ghastly and terrific.

These mournful impressions acquired unusual strength in the winter and spring of 1804. He was attacked several times with spitting of blood; and though these symptoms were not deemed fatal or incurable by his physicians, they spoke a language to his own heart not to be mistaken. He was, however, prevailed upon to try the effects of a new journey. For this purpose, he obtained from his congregation leave of absence for two or three months, and set out towards the eastern states. By this journey he was little amused or benefited, and the state of his mind, when setting out on his return, will strongly appear in the following extract of a letter, written at Boston, to his father:

"Never was a traveller less qualified for giving or receiving pleasure. I cannot discover that I have received the least benefit from my voyage or travel, nor have my spirits ascended the smallest degree above their customary pitch.

"I am convinced, that unless I undergo a total renovation, I must leave the pulpit, and endeavour to earn my bread in some other way. If my present impressions are true, if appearances deceive me not, I shall need "but little here below, nor need that little long." But as all my hopes of the world are clouded and ruined, could I only subdue some rising apprehensions, and leave my family provided for, I should not regret the blow, however speedy, that crumbled me to dust. I write not to afflict you, but to relieve myself. It is a strange consolation, but it is one of the few consolations I know. You will therefore please to pardon me for this, and for all other offences towards you of which I may be guilty. They are inseparable from my cruel disease.

"I feel the ruin of an intellect, which, with health, would not have dishonoured you, my family, or my country. I feel the ruin of a heart, which I trust was never deficient in gratitude towards my God, or my worldly benefactors. This heart has always fervently cherished the social affections, but now broods over the images of des-

pair, and wars ineffectually with the pang which bespeaks my dissolution. But I must be silent. I believe I have gone too far."

After a short stay in New York and its neighbourhood, he returned to Philadelphia, in July. During the ensuing six weeks, he was attacked by indisposition in several forms. His mind struggled in vain against the conviction of his increasing and incurable infirmities. As this excursion was followed only by new diseases, his hopes were totally subverted, and he wrote a letter to the session of his church, which contained a resignation of his pulpit.

This letter was written from the bed of sickness, and he was persuaded to recal it a few days afterwards. Some expedients were proposed for relieving him from part of his professional duties, and his mind experienced some temporary ease from the prospects which his friends held out to him. A day of customary health revisited his soul with a transient gleam of consolation; but the fatal period was now hastening, which was to bear stronger testimony than even he himself had imagined to the justice of his apprehensions.

On the thirtieth of August he rose with less indisposition than usual. The last words which he committed to paper was on the morning of that day, in a letter to his father, which, however, was not delivered till some time after the writer was no more. In this letter he declares himself incapable of being burthensome to his congregation. "Does not," says he, "my obligations to God and to my people dictate, that I ought, without farther trial, to relinquish my present charge? May not a righteous Providence point out this conduct as the only road to health? You know how fervently I love the study and the teaching of divine truths; yet, if compelled by necessity to leave the pulpit, may I not still be useful in some way more corresponding to my strength? Severe, very severe, are the dispensations of my God towards me; but I hope to be able to submit. Hope, on which I have lived, has only glimmered on my path to flatter and deceive me. I am convinced that something must now be done."

Alas! these schemes for futurity were rendered unnecessary before the rising of another sun. On the evening of that day, he occasionally raised blood, but in a degree scarcely perceptible. It was, however, sufficient to dissipate every ray of cheerfulness, and his heart sunk beyond the power of the friends that were with him

to restore it. He retired about half after ten o'clock, as little apprehensive of immediate danger as any of his family; but scarcely had he laid his head upon the pillow, when some motion within him occasioned him to say to his wife, "I feel something burst within me. Call the family together: I am dying." He had scarcely time to pronounce these words, when his utterance was choaked by a stream of blood. After a short interval, he recovered strength and sensibility sufficient to exclaim with fervency, clasping his hands and lifting his eyes, "Lord Jesus, pardon my transgressions, and receive my soul!"

Such was the abrupt and untimely close of a life, which, though short, had been illustrated by genius and virtue, in a degree of which our country has hitherto afforded very few examples!

On the character of Mr. Linn, as a preacher, it is not necessary to dwell, among those who have enjoyed opportunities of hearing him. It is well known, that few persons in America, though assisted by age and experience, have ever attained so great a popularity as he acquired before his twenty-third year. The merits which shone forth with so much splendour on his first ascending the pulpit, the discipline and experience of four years by no means impaired. Time, indeed, evinced its salutary influence only in pruning away his juvenile luxuriancies, and in giving greater solidity to his discourses, without rendering them less engaging.

As a poet, his performances must also speak for him. He took up the pen, and his effusions obtained public notice and regard, at so early an age as sixteen. He was not nineteen when he had completed two regular dramatic pieces, one of which was brought upon the stage. All his performances, however, candour compels us to consider as preludes to future exertions, and indications of future excellence. While their positive merit is considerable, they are chiefly characteristic of the writer, by suggesting to us what might have been expected from him, had Providence allowed him a longer date.

On his character in general, the following is the testimony of two of his friends, who had long enjoyed his intimacy, and who are better qualified than any one living to draw a just portrait of him. One of these, the Rev. Mr. John Romeyn, of Albany, speaks of him in the following terms:

" I need scarcely mention his talents were of the first order. His imagination was glowing, and yet it was chaste. Even his earliest attempts of writing display a soundness of judgment rarely united with fervidness of fancy, especially in young people. His taste was formed on pure models. He was capable of deep research, though constitutionally indisposed to it. His genius was poetic. He always preferred a poem, or criticisms on polite literature, to any other species of composition. His constitution was sanguine. This caused a precipitancy in some of his actions, which prudence condemned. He had a bias to pleasure, a taste for it; so much so, that I have often, in reflecting over past scenes, wondered how he escaped its pollutions as he did. His reading in early life contributed very much to increase this taste. He was disposed to be romantic in his views and conduct. His temper was quick, his sensibility exquisite. He had all the capricious feelings peculiar to a poet. Though hasty, and sometimes rash, yet was he generous: he scorned meanness. He was warm in his attachments; benevolent in his propensities to mankind. His anticipated pleasures generally exceeded his actual enjoyments. He was accustomed to dwell more on the dark, than on the bright side of the picture of life. He was prone to melancholy, the melancholy of genius. Ofttimes he appeared its victim, sitting for days silent, sad, and gloomy. He felt, even to madness, the slightest disrespect, and as sensibly enjoyed attention paid to him. He was not calculated to move in a moderate, common course with the generality of mankind; he was either in the valley of gloom or on the mount of transport; rarely did he enjoy temperate, calm pleasure. With years, this sensibility was corrected. I myself perceived a change in him, in this respect, the last time we were together. In short, his system was like a delicate machine, composed of the finest materials, which was liable to derangements from the slightest and most trifling circumstance, and the continual, diversified action of whose parts tended gradually, though certainly, to a speedy destruction of the whole."

The Rev. Mr. Alexander M'Leod, of New York, speaks of his deceased friend in the following terms:

" About the time of his beginning to preach the gospel, he was greatly agitated about two of the most important points in the christian life, What are the characteristics of gracious exercises of heart toward God? and What is the connection between the speculative truths of revealed religion and those exercises?

"I advised him to read Dr. Owen's Treatise on Communion with God. He did so. He was satisfied with it. He entered fully into the doctor's views of that interesting subject. Of the state of his mind I have received from himself explicit information. Opposed to enthusiasm, and naturally delicate, he was not very communicative on such subjects. He did not think it prudent to unbosom himself to many, because he had himself such a low opinion of his christian experience, that he thought it probable a fair statement would dispose the censorious to conclude he was entirely destitute of piety, and render the nominal professor satisfied with his own attainments; and consequently have a tendency to hinder his public usefulness, and to encourage inattention to experimental religion. He therefore scarcely ever alluded to his own experience in conversation, even with his most intimate religious friends. He was not, however, absolutely opposed to conversation upon such subjects. He could throw aside reserve, and enter upon it with freedom, when he was under no apprehension that this freedom would be abused.

"He was much under the influence of the fear of death, and a reluctance to dying. But he was not in terror of future punishment; for although he confessed himself worthy of it, he trusted in that Saviour which the gospel offers to sinners, and, firmly persuaded of the safety of believers, cheerfully hoped that his own faith, although weak, was really sincere The frame of his mind, in relation to spiritual things, was almost uniform: never extremely gloomy, never extremely joyous. It differed surprisingly from the natural temperament of his mind. In the concerns of common life, he was the slave of sensibility, the mere child of circumstances. He knew this. His religious life appeared to himself a third estate, supernaturally called into existence in the empire of his soul, which created a distinct interest, to which all his affections were drawn; and which, gradually progressing in strength and in influence, checked the dangerous efforts of the opposite principles of his constitution, rendering his joys less vivid and more lasting, and rendering his sorrows more easy to endure and overcome."

No man ever stood more in need of the aid of friendship and domestic sympathy than Dr. Linn; and no stronger proof could be given of the purity and rectitude of his character, than his feelings on this head. His father and his sisters were his friends, in the highest sense of that term. In the bosom of his own family he sought for objects in whom to repose his confidence, and from whom to claim consolation. To entertain a general regard for the wordly welfare and advantage of near relatives is so

common, and originates so frequently in selfish motives, that it can scarcely be deemed a merit in any one; but Dr. Linn's attachment to his family was of a higher order. It led him, not only into the tenderest concern for their welfare, but into an intimate union of his heart and affection with theirs. From the time of his entering on the study of theology to his death, he kept up a frequent correspondence with his father. To him he imparted all his hopes and fears, and thus afforded the strongest proof of integrity of thought and action, since eminently pure must that mind be, which can repose unbounded confidence in a father. Such confidence, indeed, is no less honourable to the father who obtains, than to the son who bestows it; and justice will not discountenance the favourable inference which may be suggested by the circumstances of the present case.

The best companions of his early youth, those whom a similarity of age and inclinations had endeared to him, were, indeed, removed, by their diverse destinies, to a great distance from him; and this circumstance might have been a source of some regret to those who loved him, had not the filial and fraternal charities glowed as warmly as they did in his heart, and supplied the place of all other friendships.

He was esteemed and beloved by great numbers, but it was his fondness for seclusion, and not any froward or morose passions, which occasioned him to have but little intercourse with mankind. This little intercourse was by no means fettered or disturbed by personal prejudices. With all his clear and cogent principles, on moral, political, and religious subjects, he combined a charity open as day, and extensive as mankind, and no one's deportment could be more benign and inoffensive than his, towards those who differed with him, even in essential points. He avoided the company of those whom he had no reason to love or respect. He did not seek beyond the small circle of his nearest kindred the company of those who had secured his regard, but when propriety or accident led him into contact with the *former*, his treatment of them was adapted to win their reverence, and he never refused his confidence or kindness, when claimed by the *latter*. Short as was his date, and clouded as was the morning of his life by infirmities and sorrows, few there are whose memory will be treated by his adversaries, if any such exist, with more lenity, or will live longer in the hearts of his friends. To mankind at large his short life was useful and glorious, since it was devoted to the divine purpose of inculcating moral and religious duty, and the purpose, only *less* divine, of illuminating the imagination with the visions of a glowing and harmonious poetry.

C. B. B.

PREFACE,

BY THE AUTHOR.

THREE books of a narrative poem are now offered to the public. They have been the production of some hours of recreation. Their plan and execution, it is conceived, are suitable to the professions of the minister of God, and the author indulges the full confidence, that by no one will he be considered as having deviated from the strictest line of professional duty. Parts of this poem are an attempt to describe some of those persecutions which Christians suffered under the tyrants of Rome, and to exhibit, in a rapid manner, the blessed effects of the light of the gospel, when carried into heathen lands. This narrative is written in loose blank verse, because it was thought that it would prove the most familiar, and the most adapted to the recital of events. In the night songs of Valerian and Azora, where rhyme appeared to be the most suitable, it is employed. The scenes of this poem are laid in a country represented as extending along the borders of the Caspian sea. To those regions, a Christian flying from the prisons and cruelties of a Roman tyrant is conducted. The lands and tracts which

stretch eastward from the Caspian were, during the reign of Nero, the most remote from the influence of Roman power; and so little have those parts of the globe been explored by the traveller, that the author thought, without carrying a poetical liberty to licentiousness, he might there place such a people as his imaginary Montalvians.

This poem is delivered to the public as the recreation of one, who, next to the religion of his Saviour, would most zealously endeavour to promote the literature of his country. From his continual and weighty engagements, he can command but little leisure. His productions, therefore, of the nature now published, must from necessity, if written at all, be hastily written. May he be allowed to hope, that this circumstance may be a little extenuation of some of the many defects which it doubtless contains?

The books which are now given to the press should only be considered as the commencement of a poem, extensive in its design. This may be discovered from the contents of the first book. Its prosecution will depend upon the author's leisure, and upon the reception which those portions of the work submitted to public inspection shall receive. Should, however, this design never be fulfilled, still the present poem may be considered as not left in all respects in an unfinished state, but as the completion of a subordinate plan.

VALERIAN.

A NARRATIVE POEM.

BOOK I.

VALERIAN.

BOOK I.

FAR in the east, washed by the restless wave,
Montalvia spreads her bold and fruitful shores:
There dwelt a people little known to fame,
But brave and hardy. No historic page
Has held their picture to succeeding years,
Nor told those customs, those heroic deeds,
Those early scenes of love, which might instruct
The children of a distant age and clime.

From Thuscan origin this people sprang.
A wandering tribe, they left their native fields

In search of other climes, and on those shores,
Which they Montalvia called, they reared their tents,
And formed their homes. Time, as she flew, increased
Their number and their strength, and introduced
The arts, to ornament their domes, their walls,
Their wide-spread cities, and their waving fields;
To brighten all the joys of social life.

Through the long waste of time, O let me look
On those wild regions, on their waving woods,
On their high rocks, beat by unceasing storms!
Rise to my view embodied forms of men;
And hither, airy Fancy, speed thy flight;
Unroll thy record; whisper to my ear
Thy burning thoughts; lend me thy wings, and bear
Me over tracts unvisited by man!
Thy fairy visions oft have met my eyes,
When musing in the dark of solitude
And night; oft, listening to thy wayward dreams,
I've followed thee o'er cloud-capt hills, o'er streams,

O'er plains, o'er scorching sands, o'er unsunned snows,
O'er deserts nightly vexed by stormy blasts:
Now be my guide once more, and let my song
Prove not unworthy of thy varying powers,
And not unpleasing for the world to hear!

A man revered within Montalvia lived,
Alcestes named, low bowed with weight of years.
He by his king was held in honour, love;
By all his wide-spread tribe in reverence held
For mild demeanour. He vaunted that his eye
Pierced far into the' oblivious past, and scanned
The map of onward time; that Heaven to him
Revealed all secret things, from others hid;
That oft, at midnight, to his hallowed ear
Some heaven-sent minister, in whispers soft,
Told him the will of those who rule o'er men.

Far in a glade, beneath a mountain's brow,
Stood the low mansion of this aged seer.

Some mossy trees bent over his rude cot,
And swinging to the winds their giant arms,
Made music like the dashing of the sea.
A bed, some rushy seats, a lumbering chest,
Composed the scanty furniture within.
Upon the hearth, with some dry fuel piled,
A watch-dog slumbered, grey with many years:
Attendant on Alcestes, his fond master,
And grateful to the hand which gave him food,
He slumbered only where the old man lay,
And followed him in all his museful walks.

An only child watched the declining age
Of this kind man; Azora was she called:
A fairer maid no fancy ever formed.
Time had flown by, and numbered eighteen years
Since on her birth her happy father smiled.
Her form was moulded by the softest grace;
Roved o'er her face bewitching smiles, and o'er
Her shoulders fell a shining flood of hair.

No step so lightly as Azora's moved
In the gay gambols to the tabor's sound,
When yellow moonlight slept upon the hills.
Skilled was her father to draw music forth
From strings that, likest those of airy harp,
Breathed ravishing and sad mellifluence;
And he had taught his daughter all his art;
And oft, when twilight stole upon the vale,
And in her steps enamoured Silence came,
Azora's harp was heard, Azora's voice
Companioning, far sweeter than its own.

On the still cottage of Alcestes rose
The dawning smile, the brightening tints of morn.
Propped by his staff, and followed by his dog,
He bent his footsteps to the neighbouring shore:
For still on nature he delighted looked,
Mused o'er a world of grandeur, drear and wild,
With raptured thought; and yet his eye reposed
As fondly on the calmly, softly fair.

Arrived, he clambered 'midst the jutting rocks,
And leaning thoughtfully upon his staff,
Gazed on the waters rolling at his feet.
While wrapt in meditation thus he stood,
A cloud obscured the beams of early day,
The winds uprose, the angry Caspian raved,
And hove his billows higher in the blast.
Thus high above the elemental war,
The sage stood museful, muttering to the winds
The burthens of his heart and wayward dreams,
When suddenly and oft his ears were pierced
By the loud barking of his faithful dog.
Curious to know the cause, he turned his steps,
And sought his dog, whom at the water's edge,
Pawing the sand, he found, and on the surge
Bending a wistful and inquiring look:
When lo! the sage, lifting his eyes, beheld
A man, whom waves had cast upon the shore,
With members cold and stiff, bereft of life.
Youthful he seemed, and noble in his form;

His face and uncouth raiment plainly spoke
A stranger, from some distant coast unknown.

Alcestes raised him in his aged arms,
Hoping that life was not quite flown beyond
The strenuous call of his health-giving art;
And aid obtaining, gently bore away
To his low cot, and to his rushy bed.
Nor was the hope deceitful, nor his call
Inefficacious. Soon he noted life,
Yet tremulous, within the clay-cold breast.

With generous care he and his daughter nursed
The unknown wand'rer; watched they o'er his couch;
By every gentle healing art they wooed
His lingering spirit back; and back it came.
When first he oped to the fair light his eyes,
He saw Alcestes and Azora bending,
With anxious eyes and piteous, o'er his bed,
And heard their cry of joy to see him live.

Astounded he beheld them, and in voice
But faint and scarcely audible, inquired,
" In what place he was cast, in what strange land,
And who the friends who saved a wretched wight,
To wanderings born, to hardships, and to tears?"

Kindly the venerable man replied:
" Quiet, O stranger! every doubt and fear,
The winds have cast thee in the house of friends.
I snatched thee from the flood, I brought thee hither,
And joy to see thee live and speak again.
Receive then, youth, whate'er my cell bestows;
Mine and my daughter's hands shall give thee food
And drink, and watch thy couch till strength returns.
Rest, stranger, rest in peace till time restore
Joy to thy heart, and vigour to thy limbs."

The old man's prayer was heard; his guest's pale cheek
Was visited again by dews of health.
A few succeeding days nerved his bold arm

Again with all its wonted strength. He lived
To thank his kind preserver for his care,
To lavish blessings on his silver head.
By more acquaintance more his heart was linked
To his protecting friends; knit were their souls
In bonds of union undissolvable.

Communing oft, the stranger asked the seer
For tidings of the land before him spread,
To him unknown, and now his place of rest.
What race, he asked, sojourn in these long vales,
Or harbour in the hills I see remote?
And who their judges, kings, and incensed gods?

To whom the sage, in accents mild, replied:
This realm, O stranger, fame reports afar;
Its kindly soil rewards the ploughman's toil,
And gives rich harvests to industrious hands:
Green vallies meet the gladdened view; and streams

Profusely flow through fields, and fill the air
With coolness, and with murmurs musical.

In shadowy lawns the shepherd's pipe is heard
To call the swains and rustic maids to sport,
While blows the gale embathed in wholesome dews,
And sweetly wanders o'er their heads the moon,
And throws her silver lustre in their paths.
Oft from the thicket, at the still of night,
Or mountain's side, the wildered peasant hears
A voice of melody, more soft and shrill
Than shepherd's reed, to which the fairy tribes
Lead on the dance, and hold their mystic rites.

Montalvia's children are a race devout,
And sacred domes they rear to many a God,
In Ombecilla, their imperial seat.
Their God of Gods is great Oasis. He
Lives in bright palaces above the skies;
His eye looks farther than his sun's beam goes;

His voice is thunder; and his nod shakes worlds.
The morning is his smile, the storm his wrath;
He knows the ways of men; approves the good,
But looks indignant on the bad; and when
The good man dies, he wafts him to his halls,
Where shines a blissful day that never sets:
But when he sweeps the bad man from the earth,
He thrusts the struggling ghost, through gaping rift,
Far into earth's vast womb, where darkness dwells,
With other guilty souls, an endless doom.

Oasis and his vassal Gods befriend
The good: but there are Gods malign, his foes,
And foes of all good men, and foes of joy.
Evil is their good, and groans their music sweet;
Death is their sport, and blood their banquet best;
They blow man's frantic passions into rage,
And goad his footsteps on to midnight deeds;
They loose the hell-hounds of unending strife,
And rain on earth diseases, plagues, and death.

Frequent on altars are the victims laid,
As offerings to the Gods. Those who are kind,
Benevolent, and just, and friends of men,
Are honoured with the sacrifice of lambs.
From these their votaries seek the smile of peace;
The fruitful field, the sky without a storm,
The richest blessings of indulgent heaven.
To stern malignant deities are slain
The beasts congenial to their savage mind:
The bull, the tyger, wild boar of the wood;
And oft the warrior youth, the blooming maid,
Are offered to appease their deadly rage.

O'er wide Montalvia Oriander reigns,
Raised by the people's voice to kingly state.
Of stature huge he is, of temper fierce,
But brave, and skilled to rule o'er restless men.
His hue is swarthy; his deep-seated eyes
Throw glances on his foes that check their steps,
And shoot a dizzy terror through their brain.

Alike terrific are his step and mein:
He moves as he well knew his high desert,
As one born to subdue. When wronged, his wrath
Is like the ocean, when in rage he heaves
Most high his billows of destruction; yet
Not tearless nor unmoved by woe is he,
And generous deeds are not unknown to him.
He loves his race; and threescore years have rolled
Since he has ruled them wisely in his love,
Fought all their battles, and engrossed their dangers.

Oft, in their songs, the poets of the land
Teach youthful ears and credulous, that their king
Has sprung from Gods, and is to Gods allied
In wisdom and in strength, and ne'er to die.
The king assents, and his best gifts enrich
The tuneful authors of his deity.

Gondalbo is the monarch's only son,
A son, alas! unworthy of his sire.

No generous passions warm his sullen soul,
But full of guile and cruelty is he;
In war the first, but last in arts of peace;
His dark eye rolls in wiles; his scowling glance
Gives presage of the' unquiet soul within;
Strong and beast-like his lusts, that, when provoked,
Will tread their perilous paths neck-deep in blood.
Oft does the father with a stern rebuke
Chastise the son; but still his stubborn will
Breaks through restraint; his overbearing pride
Scorns the keen lash, and throws the rein aside.
Yet of Gondalbo highly deem the sons
Of war, and wild adventure's restless bands:
A numerous host of such, with ill intent,
He wins, and binds them to some desperate cause.

Strong in her men, and proud in wealth and arts,
Fair Ombecilla stands, and heaves her walls
And battlements high in the airy realms.
A towered wall hems in her eastern side,

Her treasures guarding from irruption rude;
The wide-spread Caspian laves her western skirts;
The banks are fenced by rocky pinnacles,
On which the strong-winged eagle builds his nest,
And safely mues his ravenous young in blood;
And hence the eye would sicken as it gazed
On the dark waters refluent at their foot.
Within these bounds seven gorgeous fanes arise,
With altars flaming to the country's Gods.
On a near hill, o'ertopped with spiry trees,
The fane of great Oasis proudly stands,
And looks down on the city and the plains.
Awe-struck and reverend are the eyes that gaze
Upon its walls, gigantic and eternal,
Its glittering domes, and its columnar gates,
That catch the dawning beams of orient day.
Its courts at yearly festivals are thronged
By wondering crowds, whom a divine command
Calls from the utmost bounds, the circuit wide,
Of Altai's endless vales and long-drawn slopes.

Within the walls the roving eye is lost
'Midst waving hangings, and the sounding aisles,
'Mid sculptured forms, and godlike pageantry;
There meets the sight an altar to the God
Whom most they love; there oft the victim slain
Encrimsons with its blood the priestly hand;
There oft the roof re-echoes to the voice
Of prayer, to hymns and instrumental sounds.

An aged priest, Abassus called, presides,
In robes of white, and pomp pontifical:
Next to the king in honour is he held
His voice in council is esteemed most wise.
His beard of snow falls reverend o'er his breast,
And gravity sits throned upon his brow.
Childless is he, for jealous Gods refuse
To share his heart with earth-begotten cares.
He tends a taper's solitary ray,
That trembles on the temple's dusky walls,
And whose pure flame, with oils ambrosial fed,

Must never die; for in that death would sink
King, priest, and votary, halls, and fanes, and fields,
Gulphed, at the instant, in one yawning grave.
In narrow cell, these hallowed walls within,
In holy trance he sits, to watch the pledge
Of universal safety glimmering near;
Save when the king, a gorgeous train attending,
Comes to the temple to partake the rites
Ordained by great Oasis, when the sun
Sets out anew upon his yearly road.

Around the sacred fane the tombs of kings,
For virtue, warlike or pacific, famed,
Who lived to save their country, or who died,
Are built, with emblems and with trophies decked.
The precincts unprofaned spread far and wide
Around these walls; a woody wilderness,
A forest of primeval growth, the ground
Shadows with leafy canopy obscure.
The city's din, by distance rendered sweet,

Strikes the sad ear of him who roves beneath,
And keeps alive the holy mystic flame.
Hard by the broken cliff which skirts the flood
The kingly palace stands, in towered state,
And frowns defiance on the war of years;
A limpid stream, that through the city flows,
Mixes in rushing cadence with the sea.

Ah, sweet Hyphasis! natal fountain sweet,
May never hostile footsteps bathe in thee,
And ne'er rude battle mingle with thy murmur!
Well pleased, the maids of Ombecilla bathe
Their fervid temples and their floating hair
In thy enamoured wave; and chief I love
To gaze in thy broad mirror at the skies,
While many a bark, at evening's peaceful hour,
Skims lightly o'er thy wave, and all thy shades
Give echo to the oar and oarman's song.
Hyphasis and her far-spread arms bestow,

Without the walls, oe'r wide-extending plains,
O'er many a waving field, luxuriance green;
Abundance laughs around; the lowing herds
Are heard among the vales; the clambering goats
Look from the hillock's brow; and bleating flocks
Crop the green meadows, and repose in shades;
While from beneath each branching fir looks out
The cottage roof, in sweet and humble guise.
The plains are gladdened by the jocund voice
Of shepherd, calling to his errant flock,
The pipe's shrill music, and industrious sounds.

Skirting the north, a chain of mountains spreads,
That with their blue heads pierce the passing clouds.
No culture tames the fierceness of their soil;
The larch-tree climbs their steep and rocky side;
And there a ruffian horde in old time dug
Their darksome dens, and thence, e'en now, are wont,
At night's still hour, to come in search of spoil,
And led by thirst of blood.

These bands are led
By Artaban, of giant port, and skilled
In wiles, and all the robber's artifice.
His arm descends like some high falling tower
On the sad stranger wandering in the dark;
And, like a whirlwind, in his wrath he sweeps
Unsheltered villages, unguarded flocks.
Grim-visaged man! none but the brave can meet
The terrors of his dark and flashing eye,
Or mark the bend of his o'ershadowing brows;
His stride is dreadful to the field of strife,
And his dark armour fear-strikes hosts of men.

He as a God leads forth his vassal clan;
His anger slays, his nod dispenses life;
He bids, and they who dare to faulter, straight
Are piecemeal hewn by his indignant sword,
And thrown to blood-hounds to regale their thirst.
He tramples under foot the power of kings,
And walks secure 'midst ambush, and o'er mines.

Loud Rumour is most busy with his name;
It is her trade to bruit in our ears
His marvellous feats in council and in war.
She tells us how a troop of fiery youth,
Five banded thousands were they, culled with care
From out the hardy sons of southern hills,
Assailed him, whom they single, shieldless found,
At his spare meal, in bottom of a cave.

Alas! their leagued swords availed them naught
Against his iron arm; they fell in heaps,
Like grass before the scythe; he thinned their files,
Till slaughter-weary, or with pity touched,
His hand forbore; and bounding o'er the heads
Of those who fled, he vanished clean away.

A pilgrim clambering o'er the rocks, benighted,
Sought shelter from the storm within his cave.
Artaban then was prowling on the plains.
The stranger, wearied, threw himself to rest

On some dry leaves, and closed his eyes in sleep.
Not long he slumbered, when the piercing voice
Of signal-horn was heard. He waked and saw,
Entering the cave's rude door, the scowling chief.
The pilgrim started from his leafy bed.
His dress and aspect told his name, and now
Not e'en to supplication did the wretch
Betake himself, for ARTABAN SPARED NONE,
And fame through every land had blown the sound.

The chief quick darted at the' intruder eyes
Of fierce suspicion; from his sheath outflew
The sword that fear-struck mortals deem divine.
But paused the chief, and while his fiery eyes
Roved o'er the figure of the trembling man,
His tattered raiment, snowy front, and back
By age bent double, he his rage dismissed,
In accents mild he bade the pilgrim stay,
Rest on his leaves the night, and break his bread,
Sprinkled with sacred salt. When day returned,

In decent weeds he clothed him, his slow steps
He guided safely through the thicket's maze;
The track of men regained, he bade *God speed.*

Far in the utmost west, and faintly seen
From Ombecilla's tallest pinnacle,
The hills are robed in forest that spreads wide,
O'er many a league, its silence and its shade.

The traveller wandering through its trackless vales
Loses the sun's blest guidance, and in vain
His eyes are upward turned, in vain they seek
The lode-star's sparkling ray, or zenithed moon;
No sounds of kindly import greet him; beasts
That prey on men beset him, and their roar
With rushing torrents a dread concert keep.

Here oft come hunters, armed for sylvan war,
More perilous than the strife of spear with spear:

With hounds, and horn, and steeds in panoply,
They come to rouze the monster from his den.
Here oft the prince, with well appointed band,
Keen for the arduous sport, doth beat the shades,
Where lions, respited from hunger, crouch.
And here the springing tyger he encounters ;
And numerous are the spoils of panthers grey,
Of brindled lioness, and speckled pard,
And antlered hind, that deck his ghostly halls.

And such unthrifty warfare, such rude sport,
Next to man-killing, most delights his soul.
Blood slakes his thirst; the cry of agony
More sweetly wooes his ear than harp, or voice
Of choral angels ; writhing pangs of babes,
Pierced by steel-headed arrows, feast his eyes,
More richly than the rose, whose crimson dyes
The cheek of virgin, when her bridal lamp
Is lighted, feasts the eye of him she loves.

Deep bosomed in these woods, in ancient time,
There stood a fane, to the great mother earth
By hands devout up-reared; a hill's broad top
It crowns, and circling torrents rush around.
'Twas once a mansion, walled full high and strong;
Within were sightly halls and doors embossed;
But now, of all but old renown bereft,
It stands a tottering crumbling ruin, grey
With moss, and clad with ivy, and the yew
Shades its high altars; gape forlorn its groves,
Defaced and empty: for the gods that held
The sway o'er Ombecilla's infant years,
Their hill-top fanes, their pageantry, their priests,
Have vanished; and new gods, new priests, new rites,
Have filled their place: a worship brought from far
By pilgrim sages, whom the learned South
Bred in her courts, and with persuasion armed.

These grassy halls, unwindowed and unroofed,
Are fit for meditation; museful steps

Would love to rove amid these mouldering aisles,
To ponder on old time, man's fitful life,
And death that levels all things, if the haunt
Were empty of all beings else, and free
From lurking mischief. But not so: for deep
In narrow cell, within these bounds immured,
There sits a hoary wight, deep versed in arts
Of direful magic, potent to controul
Great Nature's kingdom. There, on stony couch
Reclined, he reads Contingency's vast book.
To those who dare the perils of the wood,
And homage pay to necromantic power,
He opes his lips, expounding destiny.

Great is the peril, for not beast alone,
But savage man, prowls round this dark retreat;
Wild men, and artless but in feats of war,
Slow to all kindness, but to vengeance swift;
With tongues unbroken to obsequious curb,

With arms by rustic labour unsubdued,
The Morglan hides his spoil amidst these hills.

Ere Thusca and his children reached these shores,
From hill to sea this roaming race diffused
Their ill-compacted tribes: hence to Montalvia's sons
They bear the hatred due to hostile men
Who robbed them of their fair and wide domain.
Unending war they wage, and oft molest,
By violent incursion, e'en the walls
Of Ombecilla, and their brazen trump
Shakes all her hearts; but oftener have they found
Graves in the fields their sword and brand had wasted.
And oft, the tide of war against them flowing,
The vengeful sword of Thusca's sons have left
Nought but a meagre remnant of the race,
To rue their mad ambition, and to brouze
On Nature's poor provision, cooped in rocks.

Alcestes ceased, and with him ceased the day.
Now o'er the city, o'er the plains, descend,
Long-drawn, the mantle, dew-besprent, of Eve;
The moon-beams tremble on the Caspian wave;
The hum of men, the bay of dogs, is hush'd.
Sleep comes to heal all wounds: come then to me;
And thou, O Muse, seal thy inspired lips.
The tenants of the cot to rest betake
Their weary limbs; Valerian on his couch
Sunk in soft slumbers, not unvisited
Of dreams, that whispered of futurity.

END OF BOOK I.

VALERIAN.

A NARRATIVE POEM.

BOOK II.

VALERIAN.

BOOK II.

THE jocund morning rose: from his high hill
The sun looked down, and gladdened all the plain;
Nature awakened from her still repose,
And, starting, shook the dew-drops from her robe.
The happy inmates of Alcestes' cot
From slumbers broke, and hailed the blush of day:
Assembling round the social board, they joined
In conversation sweet and unrestrained.
Anxious for him whose life he had preserved,
Alcestes asked his guest whence he had come;
To what far region he designed his course,

When he was cast upon these eastern shores.
To whom the youth in accents mild replied:

Kind reverend father, nought shall I withhold
From one to whom protection, life are due.
My tale will not detain your patience long;
And nought it has to please or interest,
Unless it meet an interest in your love.
Valerian I am called; I came from Rome;
I left a father in those splendid walls;
I fled from persecution, pain, and death:
For I, of christian faith, was hunted down
By tyrants, thirsting for the blood of those
Who would not own the idol gods they serve,
And on their altars burn their sacrifice.

My memory turns in horror from the scenes
Which I have witnessed in the walls of Rome;
My soul is sick when I recal the rage
Which breathed destruction on the friends of Christ;

Which followed them with chains, with sword and fire,
With deaths most exquisite, with glutted shouts.

O why delayed the thunders of my God?
Why slept the arm of his almighty wrath?
Ah! he, with wise and merciful designs,
Allowed to impious men a short-lived joy,
To show more signally his ruling power!
Ye streets which flowed in torrents with the blood
Of brethren butchered in the public view!
Ye midnight cells which listened to their groans!
Ye flames which lit the horrors of the night,
And gave their tortures to the startled eye!
Ye theatres which saw them torn by beasts,
And oft resounded with the pressing throngs,
Who gazed delighted on the horrid sight!—
Bear witness to the cruel, damning deeds,
Of Rome's fell tyrant and his wretched slaves!

Attentive to his words, Alcestes asked
Who were those Christians? by what faith disjoined
From those relentless men who sought their lives?

To which the youth continuing thus replied:

The God who made all men, who all preserves,
Beheld in pity our deluded race
Plunged in distress, in error, and in sin;
And, from his throne of glory in the skies,
Sent down a messenger to dwell with men,
To be a light to this sad darkened world,
To show to us the paths of truth and peace,
To suffer and to die that we might live.
This holy being was the Son of God;
By him were made the mighty worlds, which roll
Amidst the regions of unbounded space.
He spake, 'twas done, all nature took its birth,
The heavens were spread, the solid earth stood firm,
And dashed the billows of a thousand seas.

Christ was the name which this Messiah bore:
Equal was he to the paternal God,
In power, in wisdom, and in grace divine.
A few years back, this God most high appeared
On earth, and took the lowly form of man.
In poverty and sorrow he was nursed;
He wandered as an outcast in the world,
Which he had made, which moves at his command.
He bore with patience, and without a murmur,
The persecutions and the scorn of men;
With willing hand he took the cup of woe,
Exhausted to its dregs the bitter draught,
And, in atonement for the sins of men,
To justice rendered satisfaction full.

When thirty years had seen this God on earth,
He then began to publish to the world
His name divine, his messages of grace.
He spake as man before him never spake;
Revealed the will and councils of our God,

By mighty works proclaimed his peerless power,
And bade the world, woe-wearied and benighted,
To follow him, to reverence his commands,
And he would lead them on to better worlds,
Where joy unceasing ever dwells with him.

Many who heard this Saviour speak believed,
Nobly renounced the world, and followed him.
From these intrepid followers twelve he chose,
Who should be ever with him, mark his ways,
And when he left the earth record his words,
His actions, and his will, and give to men
The richest boon which heaven itself could give.
Though many heard his supplicating call,
Yet more, indignant, answered him with scoffs:
Against him slander vented all its rage,
And lavished on his head opprobrious names.

His doctrines were opposed to brutal lusts;
He nursed the spirit for a heavenly world;

He told his followers to be chaste and meek,
To look and live above earth's fleeting joys.
Such holy dictates were in wrath received
By those, who threw on passion's neck the rein,
And plung'd unheedful in the depths of vice.
Betrayed, derided, by his friends forsaken,
This Saviour-God was seized by daring hands,
By Jewish rulers was condemned to die,
And on the hill of Calvary was raised,
And nailed to an accursed cross, and there,
In sight of earth and heaven, he bled and died:
He gave the spirit which he took on earth
Into the arms of God, and closed his work,
On which he entered for the sins of men.

Nature beheld the awful scene with dread:
The God of life expiring on a cross
Surpassed conception of Almighty love;
The sun grew dim, dark shadows quenched his beam,
And Night's thick mantle fell upon the earth;

An earthquake shook the globe; the rocks were cleft;
The temple's veil was rent in twain; the dead
Awoke, arose, and left their darksome graves.

Laid in the earth, the tomb did not long hold
Him whose dominion over death extends.
Christ broke asunder all the bonds of death;
He triumphed o'er the grave; he lived again on earth;
He called around him his dejected friends;
He blessed them and rekindled all their zeal,
And darting upwards on the wings of wind,
He sought again his own eternal throne,
And left them gazing on the passing clouds.

Commissioned by the heavenly will of him
Who bled and died that rebel man might live,
His bold disciples traversed sea and land,
Preaching the truths which they had heard of him,
And publishing his overtures of peace.

No dangers could intimidate these men;
They braved the frowns, the pleasures of the world:
Love for their God, love for their fellow-men
Impelled them on, and thunder-clothed their tongues.
Some hardy champions of the cross arrived
At Rome; proclaimed aloud the Christian faith,
And planted there an early church of Christ.
This little band, though peaceable and mild,
The foes of strife, and like their master meek,
Were not permitted to remain in peace.
Loud roared the blasts of persecuting zeal;
The heathen raised his unrelenting sword;
The Roman tyrant issued his decree,
And Christian blood in torrents flowed: but still
In Rome religion flourished and increased;
The cause of Christ defied the threat of power,
The arm of malice, and consuming flames.

The Roman empire almost grasps the world,
And o'er that world the tyrant Nero reigns.

He overtops the pinnacle of vice;
Rome never groaned beneath a king so vile.
Ah! I have seen him, dark, relentless man,
In regal robes, in pomp of pride elate;
I marked the scowling of his heavy brow,
His eye which bade defiance to his God.
The church of Christ beneath his reign had grown,
And added to her numbers men of power;
The tyrant saw the Christian cause increase,
But wilful smothered for a time his rage.
At length prepared, and rising in his might,
He hurled his dreadful edicts on their heads:
He bade the sword of persecution rage
Throughout the world, and spare no Christian dog,
But butcher in cold blood all sex, all age, and rank,
And root the name of Christian from the earth.
Nero himself hurled in the domes of Rome
Some brands of fire, and while the kindled flames
Spread devastation and wild ruin round,
Throughout the streets he bade a voice proclaim

These flames were lighted by the hands of Christians,
Surrounded by the deepening shades of night;
Behold, O Romans, what these wretches do!
Then raged the fury of ten thousand fiends,
And hell's dark angels clapped their wings for joy.
The sufferings of the Christians were intense;
Yet do I shudder at the deeds I saw,
And turn with horror from that dreadful night.

A holy bishop had from Carthage come,
To cheer the courage of his friends at Rome;
His character, his goodness, and his rank,
Made him an object of the heathen rage.
A burst of voices from the frantic crowds
Denounced his death. Around his house
Gathered the fierce and raving multitude,
Tore from his bed the venerable man,
Dragged him exulting through the' affrighted streets,
Dashed him against the earth and craggy walls,
And threw his mangled members to the flames.

A lovely woman, of exalted rank,
Who had renounced the idol gods of Rome,
With a sweet infant clinging to her breast,
With streaming hair, and garments rudely torn,
Was dragged by ruffians in the public view,
Was brutally insulted, scourged, and gashed;
While from her arms her little babe was torn,
And, by the pressure of a dungeon villain,
Strangled, and stamped beneath the spurning foot.

O pardon, sir, these tears, which still will flow:
I am a soldier, nor disdain to weep;
That holy matron who was thus destroyed
Was my fond mother. Yes, I saw her die;
I tried to save her, but I strove in vain.
I, a late convert to the Christian faith,
Escaped the dangers of that hateful night,
But was reserved for further scenes of woe.
My father still inflexibly remained
Attached to heathen principles and rites.

Whate'er his will might be, he had no power
To shield his wife or son from frantic foes.
Finding no safety in his house I fled;
I refuge sought in unfrequented ways,
In narrow lanes: and at the dead of night
Stole like a felon from my lurking-place,
In search of friends, who roved unhoused like me.

In one lone ramble through the silent streets,
A passing soldier marked my hasty steps;
He knew me, and commanded me to stop.
Alarmed, I strove to disappoint his search;
But he rushed on, discovered where I was,
And with his sword unsheathed aimed at my life.
Forced to oppose his wild impetuous rage,
I drew my sword, which in the night I wore,
And in the' encounter beat the brutal wretch,
Bleeding and howling at my feet: his cry
Brought to his aid the nightly guards of Rome.
I swiftly fled, and baffled their pursuit.

The dying man pronounced my name, and bade
His friends remember to revenge his death.
Thus noted and proscribed, and like a beast
Hunted and followed by the hounds of blood,
I could not long escape their eager search.

One night, within a large and vaulted cave,
I and two hundred Christians more had met
To hear explained the scriptures of our God;
To bend before his awful throne in prayer;
To share the joys of sympathetic hearts.
Some happy hours had flown on us engaged
In acts of worship and in counsel there,
When we were startled by the march of feet,
By clashing arms, and voices near our cave.
We had not time to fly, before the mouth
Of our rude cavern was by soldiers closed,
And some fierce bands rushed in with spears and swords,
And then commenced the dreadful work of death.
The small defence which we could make was vain,

And vain our supplications to our foes.
The voice of prayer and praise was now exchanged
For shrieks of torture, and for dying groans;
Late where the broken bread and wine were spread,
The emblems of a bleeding Saviour's love,
Streamed the warm blood, and fell the mangled limb.

Sometime had slaughter rioted and raged,
When I, contending in the face of death,
In hopes that darkness might afford escape,
Flew to the places where the lamps were hung,
Dashed them to earth, extinguished all their light.
Shrouded in night, and in a cave immured,
The Roman soldiers could not now discern
Their friends from foes: wild uproar now arose;
Confusion fell upon the heathen fiends;
They poured down blows upon each other's heads,
And in mistake they one another slew:
A night more terrible I never saw.
I, purposing escape, in silence crept

Along the walls, until I reached the door:
Then calling to my friends, I bade them seize
The present time of flight, and follow me:
And springing upwards, o'er the flight of stairs,
I gained the street, and saw the moon and stars.
Scarce had I time to breathe and look around,
When I was seized by the patrolling guards,
Was bound with heavy chains, and then was thrown
In a deep dungeon, cold, damp as the grave.
Excluded there from light or human voice,
I lay some weeks, and would have welcomed death;
I had but little food, and that was coarse,
And such as hunger only would receive.

One day I heard my prison doors unbarred,
And hailed it as the sound preceding death;
But was surprised to see my keeper followed
By a patrician magistrate of Rome.
He came, he said, to rescue me from woe,
To lead me forth to liberty and life,

If I would meet compliantly his terms,
And render homage to the Gods of Rome.
Young man, said he, the emperor is kind,
And sends you mercy at your father's prayer.
If you renounce the Christian name and faith,
Honours await you, you shall roll in wealth,
In all the splendours of patrician rank;
But if you still to Christians vile adhere,
And thus forget your father, birth, and king,
Now nearly numbered are your days of life:
Hear, then, and weigh the doom, the foul disgrace,
Which you will bring upon your wretched head,
By persevering in your headlong course:
The king designs to give a splendid feast
To his victorious soldiers and his friends,
And to conclude the pleasures of the day
By exhibitions on the stage at night.
These royal exhibitions shall consist
Of men contending with fierce hungering beasts,
Of gladiators skilled in arts of war.

Hear, then, and tremble: 'tis great Nero's will
That those who meet the lion in his wrath
Should be selected from the Christian herd,
Those enemies of Rome, and of the Gods:
And you, Valerian, if you still refuse
To offer incense to the Gods of Rome,
Shall, in the view of clamorous multitudes,
War with the lion, or the savage boar,
And with your dying pangs feast the dark eye
Of riot and of joy. Think then, O youth,
Before the day of sovereign grace is past;
Renounce the errors of a wretched sect,
And fill with joy an aged father's heart.

I heard his overtures, and thus replied:
Bear back my answer to the king you serve,
And tell it to the priests and slaves of Rome,
That you have seen Valerian in his cell,
Of birth as noble as proud Rome can boast,
Chained to the cold ground, like the vilest wretch,

Buried in filth, in solitude, and night,
Pale and worn down, denied the use of food;
But that you found him rooted in his faith,
Resolved to brave your haughty tyrant's power,
And all the pangs his cruelty can form;
Resolved to die and feast the heathen wolves,
Before he would renounce the truths he holds,
Or worship any being but his God.
Tell also to the sovereign of the world,
That, though I die, I supplicate his favour
For those poor Christians whom I leave behind;
That he would stay the persecuting sword
Which riots in their blood. They never did him harm;
Peaceful are they, and, seeking peace of men,
They follow in the footsteps of their Lord,
And pay to Cæsar what to him is due.
All that they claim is liberty to serve
Their God and Saviour, as they shall think best.
The world holds not a nobler race of men,
A race more faithful to the God they own,

A race more fervent in their country's cause.
Tell to my father that his son forgives
His coldness and neglect, and that he dies
In prayers for blessings on his reverend head.
O tell him that this heart beats high with love
For him who gave me birth, and longs to pour
Its hopes, its cares, its sorrows in his breast.

The Roman magistrate withdrew in wrath.
He bade me speedily prepare for death,
To sate the hunger of the beast of prey.
He bade my keeper give me better food,
To nurse my strength against the day of combat,
That I might grapple bravely with my foe.
My father came, in pity to my wish,
To bid his wretched son a last farewell.
He wept, he pressed me to his bursting heart,
Conjured me by the love I bore to him,
By the dear memory of her who died
A sainted victim to the cause of Christ,

To seek not thus a vile and wretched end,
But to renounce the faith I had embraced,
And live again in happiness and peace.
But all his prayers and all his tears were vain;
My resolution nothing could subdue,
Rather to meet ten thousand deaths than blast
The truths I loved, my fervent hopes of heaven.

My father went in anguish from my cell,
And I remained more resolute to die.
Next day my prison door, on sullen hinge,
Was opened by a hasty, forceful hand;
I raised my eyes, and saw two Roman guards
Enter my cell; within their arms they bore
The body of a man, from whose pierced side
The dark blood flowed; with rage they dashed him down,
And to the cold ground chained his mangled limbs,
And then with taunts and haughty stride withdrew.
A time insensible the stranger lay,
His pains seemed buried in the sleep of death;

At length a groan broke from him, and declared
That he still lived. Around his cell he cast
A sad, exploring eye, and when he saw
Me, the companion in his house of woe,
He spoke such words as sorrow would employ
Toward one united in a common fate.
I, answering him, in sympathy enquired
By what occurrence he and I were brought,
Strangers before, to meet as friends in grief?
To which he answered: I, O Roman, am
In faith a Christian, and for this I bear
The wrongs and insults of a heathen's rage,
For this I now am thrust in dungeon depths,
And doomed to meet the most opprobrious death.
In childhood, led by some advent'rous men,
I came to Rome, from distant eastern climes,
Whose names, perhaps, have never reached your ear.
Here since I lived, here learned the truths of God,
For which I'm bound in chains, and doomed to die.
Land of my fathers, scenes of infant years!

Ye hills and plains, ye streams and tangled woods,
O'er which I roved, in boyhood's artless days,
O shall Cœlestian never see ye more!
Deceiving visions of the night away!
Hush not the tumults of the soul to rest,
To wake again to keener pangs of woe!

Cœlestian ceased. I strove to soothe his cares;
I told him mine; I won his honest heart,
And in the interchange of voice and thought,
With happier speed we winged the hours which passed
O'er us immured in solitude and night.
Ye sacred pleasures of congenial hearts!
This heart can feel, but cannot paint your power:
Cheerers of life and of a darkened world,
You came to bless my solitary cell!
You here have met me on this unknown shore!

At length the dreadful night of trial came.
Clad in light armour, I by force was dragged

From my loathed dungeon, and compelled to meet
The hateful shouts of eager gazing crowds.
Behold me then upon a public stage,
Mocked and insulted, and expecting death.

At signal given, with loud and horrid bound,
A lion leaps before my view: his eyes
Like kindled fires glare frightfully on me;
His hairy sides he lashes with his tail;
And, couching down, he pours his chilling cry
Of hunger and of rage; aroused I start
From my sad trance, and in defence I rush
Against a foe so terrible and fierce.

Soon as he feels the edge of my keen sword
His rage redoubles, and his hideous roar
Deafens the ear, and shakes the vaulted walls;
He waves the terrors of his hoary mane.
Collecting all his might, at me he leaps,
And with extended claws threatens to tear

My quivering members piecemeal on the stage.
I start aside and disappoint his rage,
And, aided by the gracious arm of Heaven,
Ere he recovers from his bound mispent,
I plunge my weapon in his panting heart.
The mighty savage falls and rolls in blood,
He gasps and struggles in the pangs of death.
Loud shouts of exultation rend the air,
A thousand voices bid the conqueror live.

The emperor listens to the general wish:
At his command the guards conduct me back
To my dark cell, there to remain and wait
The will and pleasure of my vengeful foes.
I met again Cœlestian, my kind friend,
Whose life till now his enemies had spared:
He welcomed me as risen from the tomb,
And come to haunt his solitude: he scarce
Would listen to my tale, or grant belief
To my escape from danger and from death.

Excuse me, friends, if I should draw the veil
O'er the new sufferings of my prison-house.
With heavy wing the long and tardy days
Passed o'er my dungeon; still I cherished hope:
At length arose the dawn of better days,
And freedom came to bless my weary eyes.
My father's bribe seduced the keeper's heart,
And he consented to unlock the doors,
And let Cœlestian and myself depart,
While slept the guards, and night had hushed the world.

Escaped from prison, I and my new friend
Resolved to fly for ever from those shores
Where liberty of conscience was denied,
Where God was worshipped midst the fears of death.
Disguised, by night to Ostia's port we came,
And meeting there with several Christian friends,
Who there had gathered with the same design,
A vessel we obtained, in which we all
Embarked, and left the walls of haughty Rome,

Our fields, our country, and our friends behind,
And guided by Cœlestian on our way,
We turned our sails toward these far-eastern climes,
The most remote from Roman rage and power.

Through different countries, many woes we passed,
In quest of these auspicious scenes of rest:
Through Scylla and Charybdis safe we came,
Through the rough Hellespont we ploughed our way,
O'er the dark Euxine then with prosperous winds,
With hearts made lighter with success, we flew.
At length we reached the Caspian ocean's mouth,
And hailed with joy its ever-rolling wave.
But ah! this transport was too soon o'ercast;
A storm arose, the billows beat the skies,
The vessel reeled beneath the sweeping blast,
The helm refused the guidance of the hand,
The sails were split in pieces, and we drove,
Left to the fury of the winds and waves.

Long we sustained this elemental war,
Till on a rock the unrelenting winds
The gallant vessel dashed: ah! then arose
Loud shrieks which mingled with the thundering storm;
The shivered timbers floated on the sea,
And o'er the sinking hulk the waters rolled.
My noble friends and all the crew were lost;
They perished struggling with the flood; me, me
Alone the raging billows safely bore,
And cast me on these friendly shores of peace.
You found me, father, you have brought me here,
And, thanks to you and to this generous maid,
I live. I feel again the glow of health;
I live to bend in gratitude and praise
To that high Power who guides the course of worlds,
And who in love the sparrow's life sustains.

END OF BOOK II.

VALERIAN.

A NARRATIVE POEM.

BOOK III.

VALERIAN.

BOOK III.

VALERIAN ended: while his listening friends
Hung on his words with interested hearts.
Excited by his long adventurous tale,
Still they with fond solicitude enquired
Concerning Rome, the dangers he escaped,
By land, by sea; from beast and cruel man.
All which, with grateful heart and willing tongue,
The Roman answered with minutest care;
And, while he spoke, a tender speaking eye,
An eye of soft seraphic blue, was fixed
With admiration on his pensive face.

Valerian met those brilliant orbs of love:
His soul within him felt their potent sway,
And gratitude increased the holy flame.

Serenely o'er their heads the summer days
In wild luxuriance flew: but still the youth
Restrained the fervent vow he longed to breathe
In the soft ear of his enchanting maid.
He marked her manners and her generous heart,
Her mind of active and discerning power,
And heard delighted her deep-warbling harp;
Her simple vestments modestly displayed
A matchless form of grace, on which his eye
With virtuous and admiring pleasure dwelt.

Meantime Alcestes to the aged king
His guest Valerian led. The warlike king
Received him with a smile and courteous mien;
He bade him welcome to his distant shores,
And promised him protection and repose.

Soon tot he chiefs and to the people known,
Valerian gained their confidence and love.
They praised the stranger and his manners mild;
They heard his tale, and listened to those truths
Which Christ and his apostles came to teach.
Emboldened by his welcome to those shores;
And glowing with a zeal to spread abroad
The love and glory of his dying Lord,
And to diffuse among a savage race
The gospel's light, he with discretion broke
His great design; gained o'er the kingly mind,
Won to his cause the venerable seer,
Azora's gentle heart, and him who watched
The sacred lamp within the temple's walls.

At length prepared, impressed with power divine,
Montalvia's race received the faith of Christ,
Bowed to that God whose thunder shakes the skies,
Who called all being from the womb of night,
Who breathed in man the breath and soul of life,

Who rolls a thousand wheels, who life sustains,
By the sole power of his Almighty arm,
And all things governs by his sovereign will.
Then, by the radiance of the light of heaven,
Infernal darkness from the land was driven;
The demon-yell was hushed by Mercy's voice;
And idol-temples by the arm divine
Were beaten to the ground; the hovering winds
Which Superstition spread, to catch the beam
Emitted from the skies, were wide dispersed
By Heaven's all-conquering storm; and from the shrine
Crushed by the thunder's vindicating strength,
The trembling priests and impious prophets fled.
No more the altars smoked with human blood,
Butchered to quench a deathful idol's rage:
But prayer and heartfelt praise breathed from the lips,
To Him the source and spring of life and joy,
To Him who died that rebel man might live,
Ascended to the skies, and reached his ear.

The Roman saw with joy the work of God
Progress and flourish in this heathen land.
To Him he bent in fervent grateful prayer,
Who sees and governs all concerns of men,
Who him had led, o'er seas and through distress,
To this asylum from a tyrant's rage.

But some there were whose dark malignant minds
Beheld with rage their idols hurled to earth,
And vented curses on the Christian's head,
Who had o'erthrown their superstitious faith.
'Mongst these was Palladon, a wileful priest,
Hoary in years and versed in deeds of blood;
Beneath the sacred mantle he concealed
A cruel, plotting, ever-restless soul,
Which laughed at woe, which mocked the tear that flowed.
His eye had marked Valerian as his prey,
It scowled with vengeance on his noble form,
And would have smote him with its horrid gaze.

Collecting round him, in a private dome,
His friends long tried in villainy and wiles,
He thus addressed them with his winning voice:—
Happy am I to find, my virtuous friends,
That some with me, still faithful to their Gods,
Will mourn the honours of their country lost.
Who could believe that this strange wandering man,
Full of vain babblings, could o'erthrow so soon
The long established worship of our land!
Our king, grown old, enfeebled in his mind,
Implicitly receives his baby tales;
Our bald-pate priest, who has become a child,
Has also listened to this man of Rome;
And thousands following these deluded men,
Their fathers' and their country's gods have left.
No more we hear the voice of praise ascending
To great Oasis; and no more we see
On his high altar the fat victim bleed.
The muttering skies proclaim the damning deeds:
And last night spoke a demon of the storm,

And said, Avenge, O priest, thy prostrate Gods.
O mourn, my friends, at those affrighting woes,
Which hang, like dark clouds, o'er this guilty land!
Let us, still true to our forefathers' faith,
Seek that relief which may from union flow.
Say, is there not some way, some righteous path,
Which being pursued by us may yet avert
The merited impending blow of Heaven?

There is, cried one: the Christian youth should die.

There spoke, said Palladon, the voice of truth:
The Gods themselves would justify the deed,
And would reward the bold and faithful arm,
Who crushed the foe of Heaven. Let us then, friends,
Now take that counsel which will most secure
The execution of a deed so just:
And ye great Powers who rule the fates of men,
Be present with us, give our arms with strength
To vindicate successfully your cause.

He said: loud acclamations shook the dome,
Many contended who should foremost share
The danger of the deed. Palladon's voice
Hushed the big tumult, and besought his friends,
To wait in silence the most favoured time.—
Let us all share the danger of the deed;
Let us all bear a weapon in our hands,
True to our Gods and to our country's rights;
And let that steel which chance shall most befriend
Drink the heart's blood of Heaven's offending foe.—
He said: they all assented to his words,
They parted, and their homes in silence sought.

Gondalbo's trumpet at the dawn of day
Had summoned to the chace his sportful friends:
With these came forth a troop of martial dames,
Led by Rolinda, first of all in charms.
Valerian, curious to explore the wood,
Where the magician kept his mystic school,
Accoutred in the armour of the land,

Mounted a steed, and followed in the train.
His stately form, the grace with which he moved,
And checked the fury of his headlong horse,
Struck his beholders with surprise: but most
Rolinda's eye him followed o'er the plains,
And most her tongue was lavish in his praise.
His courser bounded to the winding horn,
And to the clamours of the noisy hounds,
That echoed from the hills; he proudly pranced,
He snuffed the gale, and waved his floating mane.
When they had reached the borders of the wood,
Valerian saw with wonder its thick shades,
The towering height of its deep-rooted oaks,
And felt the chill of their o'ershadowing gloom.

Far in the woods the hunters had not plunged,
Before the hounds from his rude covert roused
A huge and furious boar: his glaring eyes
Shone like two stars amidst the depths of night;
Like to the murmur of seditious winds,

His breath was heard from far; he champed the foam
Which dropped down roping from his crooked tusks.
He heard the tumult of the coming war,
And high upridging his hard bristly back,
Prepared to meet the onset of his foes.

The dogs that first advanced were gashed and torn,
Their fellows fled, the stoutest hunter paused.
Swift as the winds Rolinda onward flies,
Nor heeds the counsel of her female train:
At the fierce beast she boldly hurls her spear;
True to her aim, it strikes him in the side,
The blood pours down in torrents from the wound.
The monster rages with excess of pain,
And turns his wrath on her who gave the blow,
Loud roaring like the storm. Rolinda's steed
Starts back and trembles, while the ponderous boar
Against him rushes, throws him to the earth,
And with him the fair burden which he held.
Helpless Rolinda lies, expecting death:

Valerian sees, he hastens to her aid,
He throws himself like lightning from his horse,
With his long spear he rushes on the boar,
And buries it in his extended jaws:
He falls, and shakes beneath his weight the ground.
Valerian raises the affrighted maid,
And gives her back in safety to her friends.

The danger past, again the trumpet sounds
The signal for the chase, and on they rush,
While horn, and clam'rous hound, and joyous shouts,
With peal on peal through the deep thickets break,
And rouse up silence from her lonely haunts.

As thus they wound the tangles of the wood,
And beat each thicket, and explored each hill,
They heard the loud blast of a bugle horn,
And far within the forest shade beheld
A youthful warrior leaning on his spear.
As they approached they marked his noble form,

His dark plume waving to the breath of air,
His glittering armour, and his gallant mien,
And soon Rolinda in the youth beheld
Brave Torismond, the Arimaspian prince,
And trembled for the fate of him she loved.

The hunter, when he saw the train approach,
Started surprised, and sternly grasped his spear:
And soon as he and the Montalvian prince
Each other knew, rage sparkled in their eyes,
And indignation crimsoned o'er their cheeks.
Aloud Gondalbo called upon his foe,
Upbraided him with taunts, and bade his troop
Seize on the wretch, and bind him hand and foot,
And bear him to the presence of the king.

The prince, indignant, at this insult laughed;
Firm in his place he stood, and shook his spear,
And towering in his pride of strength thus spoke:—
Ha! think'st thou, prince, thou mighty man of war,

Thou bold upbraider of a single man,
That thou hast caught the lion in thy toils,
The lion who has thinned thy crowded ranks?
And that thou'lt seize him, and him bound expose
To the rude gaze of thy detested slaves?
I scorn thy threats: here would I stand, alone,
And meet the brunt of your united force,
But that I have within the sound of horn
A band of soldiers, who have hither come
With me to share the pleasures of the chase.
Then tremble, ruffian, measure back thy steps,
While now I bid my absent friends approach.

He said, and loudly blew his bugle horn,
Which far extended its indignant blast.
The warning sound his friends obedient heard,
And swiftly at his call through thickets dashed,
And gathered round their loved and warlike chief.
Then had the storm of bloody battle raged,

But that young Torismond his soldiers checked,
And thus accosted the Montalvian prince:

Ho! man of words, now execute thy threat;
Now bind me fast, and bear me to your king:
Sooner by far you might arrest the winds,
And yoke the lightnings to your battle-car.
But why for us should these bold warriors bleed?
Why in a private quarrel should we waste
The lives of friends so faithful in our cause?
Come on then, chief, alone, and leave thy horse,
And meet the prowess of this single arm;
And let our bands look on and mark our feats,
And say who most excels in deeds of arms.

He said: Gondalbo bounded from his horse;
He bade his soldiers pause, nor raise a hand
Or weapon in the fight. Silence ensued;
The combatants drew near; aside they threw
Their spears; they seized their swords, together rushed,

And shook the earth beneath their mighty strides:
Swift fell the blows of their loud thundering steel,
And far and wide their din of battle spread.
At times Gondalbo seemed to press his foe
With conquering force; at times he seemed to yield
Beneath his rival's power; and both at times
Seemed weary of the fight and dreadful toil.

Long they contended, and the turf beneath
With foot they hardened, and with blood they dyed;
Yet still in doubtful scales the vict'ry hung.
At length Gondalbo, with a wary eye,
Believed he saw his rival's power decline,
And thought one mighty effort would secure
To him the triumph of the bloody strife.
Rouzing his strength, and raising high his sword,
He struck the head of his relentless foe;
While at the moment he himself received,
Deep in the side, the plunge of his keen sword:
Both fell, and rolled in anguish on the ground.

Loud shrieked Rolinda, and within the arms
Of her attendants sunk: her lover's name
Burst from her lips, and told the tender flame
She nursed with secret sorrow in her heart.
When the troops saw their princely leaders fall,
They to their aid with eagerness rushed on:
Each man believed his fallen chief was dead,
And breathed revenge upon his hated foes.
Dark was the battle which with fury raged
Between these adverse bands: they were two clouds
Charged with dread thunder that together met;
They were two torrents meeting on a hill,
And upward dashing in the air their spray.

Valerian's noble soul was sick of wars;
He mourned for men contending like the beasts,
With cruel joy, and rioting in blood:
But now in self defence he drew his sword,
And with an arm unrivalled in its strength,
Beat from him the assaults and rage of war.

The fight was won by bold Montalvia's sons;
Through the wild shades the Arimaspians fled,
And left their leader bleeding on the earth.
Valerian checked his friends in the pursuit,
And bade them both the fallen princes raise,
And to the city gently bear them back.
Rolinda followed in the mournful train,
With eye dejected and with altered air;
Her long dishevelled hair waved in the wind,
And frequent sighs broke from her aching heart.

Valerian, with a few who yet remained,
Through the wide forest still explored his way,
Till the high turrets of a ruined fane
Rose to his view, embosomed in the woods:
Along its side a torrent dashed its foam,
And a bleak hill o'erlooked its massy walls.
Here the magician lived, and, nursed in wiles,
Deluded men by tales of future life.
Arrived, they sought admission at the door,

And heard their blows roll through the mouldering hall.
A hand within drew back the iron bars,
And a deep voice cried, Mortals, follow me;
O ye who come with just desire to learn
The secrets of my dark mysterious art,
To hear me tell the hidden scenes of time,
Come follow me, and I will lead you where
The world shut out shall not obtrude, or break
The spell of magic which I breathe around.

The hearts of some were fear-struck by his words,
But still Valerian led the way to know
How would this scene of dark deception end.
They trod with caution up a flight of stairs,
And moved along a floor with echoing steps,
Which winding led them to an iron door:
Here the magician paused, and with a key
Unlocked the door, which turned on sullen hinge,
And showed the hall of magical deceit.
He bade them enter, nor a whisper breathe.

He then with slow and measured step withdrew;
And suddenly appeared, waving a rod,
And clothed in vestments of the deepest black.
Valerian marked his venerable form,
His eye of piercing and bewildering glance,
His beard and hair, white with the snows of age,
The hoarse and hollow cadence of his voice.
The windows of this circling hall were closed,
And two dim lights, suspended from the walls,
Threw o'er the darkness a deceitful ray;
Silence prevailed, and superstitious dread
Pressed with cold hand the unenlightened heart.

And now the wizard spoke: Tread not, my friends,
Beyond that line of black which marks the floor;
And, for the world's vast treasures, O speak not
When my kind spirit answers to my call.
Now fearless speak, O mortal, and declare
What thou would'st know of me. My art extends
Far in the depths of dark unmeasured time.

A voice then spoke: Mysterious being, tell
What means this vision, or this warning dream.
Some years ago my warlike father fell,
Struck by assassin hands, within these shades:
'Twas three nights since, at wizard-hour of one,
When the pale moon-beam over nature hung,
And the red planet trembled in the sky,
Methought I saw my father in my room,
Bending on me a stern enquiring eye;
He thrice traversed with martial step the floor,
Which doleful echoed as he moved along;
Inverted in his hand he held his spear,
And his tall plumes waved awful o'er his brows.
Slowly approaching my bed-side he placed
His hand upon his bleeding breast, and said,
My son, avenge your father's wrongs; I fell
By villain-wiles within the forest shades.
He spoke no more, but vanished from my sight,
Just as I broke the frightful dream, and rose
To clasp him in my arms.

Tell thou to me
What means this dream, this vision of the night.

Then ceased the voice. The stern magician seemed
As if deep-struck by agonies of guilt:
Nature was acting in the place of art.
His features were distorted and convulsed,
His dark eye-balls seemed bursting from his head,
And frenzy seemed to agitate his frame.
At length, collecting all his firmness, he
Prepared to act his diabolic part.
He drew a phial from his robe, and poured
A liquid which it held upon the floor.
A flame arose with undulating spires,
And with a blue light overspread the room;
A cloud of smoke proceeded from the flame,
And rising to the ceiling, there assumed
A form which bore resemblance to a man.
At length a voice of deep and hollow tone
Burst on the ear from that collected cloud,

And answered thus to the inquiring man:—
Why hast thou, mortal, called me from my place?
Why didst thou say, Perturbed spirit, come?
Yet, powerful man, obedient to thy voice,
I here am wafted on the clouds of woe:
Then hear me speak, and bid my spirit rest.
The dream spoke truth: within this forest fell
Thy father, youth; a dagger pierced his heart;
Yet walks the earth, and breathes the air of life,
The man who slew him at the dead of night;
Yet shall the son avenge his father's wrongs.—

Silence ensued; the mystic flame expired;
The aged wizard toward the window sprang,
And let the day-light enter through the hall:
Big drops hung coldly on his pallid face,
And he looked wildly as if woke from death.
In fear and wonder the Montalvians stood,
And more than iron fetters bound their tongues.
Valerian, bending a stern piercing eye

On the magician, thus the silence broke:—
Old man, I've marked attentively thine art,
And for thy peace, and for the peace of men,
I warn thee, follow thy deceits no more.
Well hast thou studied and practised thy wiles,
But art in thee could not conceal thy guilt:
Say, know'st thou not more of the man who fell,
Stabbed by assassin, than thou gav'st a tongue?
I pity thee; but mark me, magic-man,
Renounce thy 'snaring wiles, or fear my power.
A chemic potion, which thy phial held,
Produced the flame and smoke which filled the room;
Thou art possessed of ventriloquial powers,
Which made thy voice seem bursting from the cloud.
Awed and o'erpowered by these imposing arts,
Men are deluded by thy cunning tales,
And honour thee as something more than man.—

He ceased: he hastily withdrew, and left
The man of magic, trembling at his words.

Through the deep woods he measured back his steps,
And having reached again the open plains,
Dismissed in courteous terms his friendly guides,
And then pursued his solitary way.

Night fell around him as he bent his course,
Seeking the cottage of his gentle friend.
No moon arose to light him in his path;
The stars were hid by wrathful flying clouds;
Shrill blasts swept o'er him, and big drops of rain
Beat loudly on the earth; the lightning's flash
Disclosed the terror of the gathering storm,
And muttering thunders shook the vault of heaven.

Valerian, still a stranger in the land,
Deprived of light, and parted from his friends,
With speed urged onward his affrighted steed,
Uncertain of the road. He had some hours
Thus held his devious course, when, by the glare
Emitted from the clouds, his startled eye

Caught a huge figure moving at his side.
Scarce had his voice denoted his surprise,
When a strong hand impelled him from his horse.
With sudden bound he broke the vigorous grasp,
Unsheathed his sword, and, with a fearless heart,
On his assailant rushed; he struck the steel
Which his mysterious foe plunged at his heart.
Then in the dark a deadly battle raged;
Blow answered blow, and from the neighbouring hills
Their noise of battle rung. Not long they fought,
Before shrill whistles sounded through the gloom,
Approaching steps were heard to beat the earth,
And hosts of foes came to the aid of him
Who felt the thunder of Valerian's arm.
A voice then spoke: Ho, comrades, seize this man!
And harm him not, but bear him to my cave.

Resistance proved in vain; by numbers pressed,
Valerian now was seized, his arms were bound,
And he was dragged to Artaban's rude cave.

Awhile he lay in darkness, and in doubt
What fate impended o'er his weary head:
On his suspense the light of torches beamed,
And in the cavern throngs of robbers came,
Clad in dark armour, and begrimed with dust.
Above the rest Artaban towered in bulk,
In form more beautiful, in brighter arms;
The helmet which he wore, with streaming hair,
Concealed a face of strong, determined lines.

Breaking the awful stillness of the night,
In voice commanding thus he spoke: Brave men,
Unbind the captive's hands. Say, gallant foe,
Dost thou know Artaban, who roams these wilds?
Hast thou not heard of him? If thou hast not,
Thou art a stranger here. I, I am he;
I crush the head of overtopping pride,
And take from wealth its overflowing stores.
A robber I am called; the mother clasps
Her babe more closely to her anxious breast

At mention of my name: her or her babe,
Or sorrow's worn-down man I never harmed:
I know of men who roll in regal power,
Who merit more the robber's name than I.
Say, stranger, who art thou? Tell without fear;
Since I was born I never coped with man
Who wielded with a braver force his sword.

Fearless, Valerian answered his desire,
Told who he was, his hasty flight from Rome,
And his arrival on those distant shores.
Which when he heard, the robber seized his hand,
And in impetuous accents thus replied:—

Art thou a Roman? See a Roman here!
Behold my face uncovered to thy gaze,
And mark the eagle-feature which it wears.
I also fled from Rome, ungrateful Rome:
This bosom, rough with honourable scars,
Can tell how faithful I have been to her,

But gratitude made no return to me.
I left, indignant, her detested shores,
And here have lived on plunder and on war.
With my whole heart I honour thee, brave man;
Be henceforth free as air; Artaban's band
Shall never do thee harm; I am thy friend,
And in thy time of danger call on me.
I now will guide thee safely to thy home,
Through all the windings of these darksome haunts.

He said; and answering to his words, drew forth
Valerian from his cave, and over hill,
And over bosky dell, through winds and rains,
And through the starless night, him faithful led,
And left in safety at Alcestes' cot.

This good performed, these strange adventures past,
Valerian with his venerable friend
Dwelt for a time securely in repose:
The pomp of Rome, her halls and ivory domes,

Gave not that peace, which blessed the cot
That humbly rose upon the Caspian shore.
Nor was the youth forgetful of his love;
His heart's fond treasure was Azora still:
A mind so kind and good, a form so fair,
Dwelt in his thoughts, and soothed his nightly dream.
She was his pupil, and, with tenderest care,
He taught " his lovely scholar all he knew;"
Explained to her the Scriptures of his God,
And all the wonders of the Roman world.
From his instructions she in knowledge grew,
Her soul expanded with the love of truth,
Her eye was lighted by the torch of heaven,
And all her love she centered on her friend.

One night Valerian rambled o'er the plains,
And, guided by the pale torch of the moon,
Thoughtful indulged the golden dreams of love:

Clear was the sky, no night-cloud crossed the stars,
The spicy zephyr poured his murmuring song,
And on the rocks the heaving billows died.
Enchanted with this scene of night, and wrapt
In melancholy guise, he rambled on,
And bent his museful steps to a wild hill,
Whose top was shaded by a knot of trees,
Whose foot was bathed by a romantic stream,
Which poured its mellow cadence on the ear,
And in the tangled thickets lost its way.
Before he reached the hill, his ear was struck
By the sweet clamours of Azora's harp,
And by this ditty warbled to the winds:

Clothe me, still night, within thy mantle grey,
Nor mark the blush that crimsons o'er my cheek,
Bear not my accents, rustling wind, away,
O let no mortal hear me while I speak.

To thee, soft moonlight, I address my tale,
Ye stars of heaven, to you I lift mine eyes,
With tears I bathe the pinions of the gale,
And load these shadows with my heavy sighs.

Come, harp, thy strings of harmony awake,
Come lull thy mistress with one soothing strain,
This magic sorrow of her bosom break,
Loud let thy transports drown the voice of pain.

Azora loves; her bosom feels a flame,
A passion pure, most sacred, and most true;
Why should I falsely blush to tell his name?
Brave youth of Rome, my bosom beats for you.

Thy lofty soul, thy martial form of grace,
Thy heart all noble, free from treacherous art,
Thy winning manners, and thy pensive face,
Have won Azora's unassuming heart.

O had I still this heart to give again,
Brave youth of Rome, I'd give it to thee still;
O could I banish from this heart its pain,
Its dissolution would oppose my will.

But low and humble is Azora's lot;
Born in obscurity, a heathen maid,
My days have flown in yonder little cot,
My rambling foot has never left this shade.

But thou, dear youth, didst come to cheer this clime,
To pour instruction on this darkened mind,
To teach this soul to pass the bounds of time,
To soar to heaven, and leave the world behind.

O were I mistress of the proud world's throne,
And thou a suppliant on thy bended knee,
Thee, dear Valerian, would I love alone,
No passion would I cherish but for thee.

Say then, brave stranger, can thy heart receive
A heart in which thy virtues ever dwell?
These shades, these streamlets, canst thou ever leave,
And bid Azora and her cot farewell?

Oh, if thou canst, dear wandering youth, adieu,
I'll write thy image and thy memory here,
And at still evening, while I think of you,
I'll seek thy safety with a prayerful tear.

Cease now, my harp, fall silence on thy strings,
Dews of the night, descend upon my breast,
Breeze, fan my loose locks with thy unfelt wings,
And rock me, angels, in the arms of rest.

Azora ceased; and on the passing winds
The murmur of her music died away.
Wrapt in big transports stood the listening youth;

Dreams from Elysium for a moment bound
In fetters magical his limbs and tongue:
At length he broke his joy's enchanting spell,
And with a voice of full and mellow tones,
Thus answered to the night song of the maid:

Where roves my sad romantic maid,
Kind shepherds can you tell?
Say, have you seen her in the shade,
The hill, or tangled dell?
Tell me, sweet stream, that babblest by,
Hast thou not listened to her sigh?

Sad echo, from thy mossy hall,
Didst thou the wanderer see;
And didst thou answer to her call,
And did she speak of me?
Soft gales of evening, bathed in dew,
Oh! have you seen her as you flew?

I seek her over hill and dale,
  O'er stream, through whispering grove;
I tell her name to every gale,
  Breathed from the heart of love;
I call—but still no voice replies;
I call—but still Azora flies.

The robe she wears, of azure hue,
  Floats loosely on the air;
Her eyes are of seraphic blue,
  Pale brown her waving hair;
Her steps are like the bounding roe,
Her cheeks the rose, her forehead snow.

The nightingale would cease to sing,
  To listen to her lay,
And zephyr spread his silken wing,
  To bear the notes away:
Her voice, her air, her face impart
A mind, a genius, and a heart.

Behold, the sun withdraws his beam,
And darkness shrouds the scene;
The night-bird pours his hollow scream,
The night-wind sweeps the green;
No pipe is heard on mead or rock,
The shepherd homeward drives his flock:

O then return, my peerless fair,
Restrain thy eager flight;
The falling dews will drench thine hair,
Unwholesome is the night.
I'll wind each thicket, beat each shade,
Till I have found thee, wandering maid.

Thus sang the youth; and lightly o'er the stream,
And up the hill with bounding step he flew.
He found Azora leaning on her harp;
His faithful vows he proffered at her feet,
And he received a heart already his.
Chaste Dian smiled upon their virtuous love,

And silvered o'er the shadows of the night.
Valerian led her to her father's cot;
They offered up their mutual vows to God;
The happy father blessed the faithful pair,
And Heaven's rich blessings crowned their days and years.

By Oriander and the nation loved,
Valerian grew in influence and power;
The truths divine he taught more widely spread,
And future years, he hoped, would bless the hand
Which, in the land of darkness and of death,
Had sown the seeds of everlasting life.
How far were answered these auspicious hopes,
The scenes and changes which by years were brought
On those fair climes which own the eastern sun;
The deeds of war, and garments rolled in blood,
Conspiracy, with all its dark designs,
With milder scenes of love and quiet life,
If Heaven permit, my verse may yet unfold.

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